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HORATIO HOWARD BRENTON.

A NAVAL NOVEL.

BY

CAPTAIN SIR EDWARD BELCHER, R.N., C.B.,
F.R.A.S., F.R.G.S., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. III

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HORATIO HOWARD BRENTON.

CHAPTER I.

It is well to live a perfect life, full of light and shade, complete in all its phases; and I do not complain that mine has had its great sorrows, as well as its great joys—its hours of intense anxiety, as well as moments of deep calm and happiness.

As I grew older, the excitements of my life grew more vivid, and its incidents more serious; and the only reason which prevented me from rejoicing that this was so, resulted from my mother's peculiar temperament, or, rather, peculiar state of health.

During my earlier years, my mother, as I hope I have made my readers understand, without displaying any great affection for me, nevertheless exhibited the greatest hatred towards the wicked uncle to whom I have frequently alluded, because, as she asserted, he was constantly plotting both against my life and fortunes; but as the time drew near for my taking possession of the property to which, as it appeared, I was entitled by the yet unread will of my grandfather, my mother seemed gradually to become estranged from me, and to experience a strong revulsion of feeling in favour of her unprincipled brother. She would frequently describe him as he appeared in his younger days, and make comparisons between him and myself, which were by no means to my advantage. Sometimes she would sketch little scenes with all that charm which belongs to memory when it recurs to the days of youth, and my uncle was always the hero. The least allusion to my possession of property threw her into a state

of violent agitation, and I could not kiss her without kissing away tears which I knew were shed for my uncle.

But events thickened, and every day it became more necessary to act with energy and decision. Information respecting my uncle began to crowd upon me, and to wear a new aspect. He had long since joined the order of the Jesuits, and had acted in England during a considerable time as a Jesuit spy. The English government had watched his proceedings most minutely, and in the course of the investigation of his political offences, had discovered many of his plots against myself and my property. It was now a matter of doubt, therefore, whether he should be driven from the country as an offender against me, or as an offender against his country.

I will here repeat a conversation which took place between myself and my various friends on the subject, only remarking that Sir Charles Harrison had now become my firm friend, and was present.

"I believe," said Mr. Deedes, "we shall succeed in transporting him for life. But he has powerful friends in London, and no expense will be spared to rescue him, or buy off his trial; I warn you now, as far as my honour will permit, if you let this man escape, your peace of mind—even your life—is not safe."

I grasped him by the arm. "When did you ever see me weak in a just cause? Convince me simply that this man suffers by the laws of my country for his crimes, and it matters not, friend or foe, I do my duty. But, beware you do not forget yours."

"Then, sir, my instructions are complete, and my duty is to satisfy your conscience."

"Now, gentlemen," said Sir Charles, "caution is necessary; unless the utmost secrecy is observed, you will foil all. Your uncle, sir, is near town, ready to execute any act of desperation. He must be decoyed, captured, and sent abroad. Leave the management of these matters to Mr. Deedes and myself."

Mr. Deedes observed:—

"Sir, at a convenient opportunity, I can capture, by your assistance, that man. But you must suffer yourself to become his tool, and bind yourself to his artifices, until our net includes other more important fish. The Government will afford every aid, and if dexterously handled, nothing will be refused to your young friend for his manliness of character; for he hourly braves no common danger while this plot remains undiscovered. I must ask him for the security, not only of his person or life, but for the ends of justice, not to quit the house after dark, until this trial be ended."

As the conversation proceeded, the leading points of action were revealed, and the possibility of the death of my mother's brother hinted at. At this Ellen's distress was violent; she lost her speech for some time, and could barely be prevented from fainting. At length, recovering, she said—

"Oh! Horatio, who shall reveal this to your mother?"

But I observed—"Why reveal? You cannot reveal anything now. Every effort will be made to save his life; but do you weigh the life of my mother—your life—that of my sister—her husband, and mine against that of a professed murderer—an assassin? When the die is cast—when he is apprehended, convicted, and sentenced, then talk of revealing. But none of this may occur; he may escape. Independent of this, whatever shock my mother's feelings may sustain, we all know that on this particular point she—from terror of his revenge on herself—has talked of such an event coolly. But you know my uncle better than I do."

"I do indeed, Horatio, and it is that which alarms me. If he be taken in England, his life is forfeit!"

"And yet, dear Ellen, what is his object here? To commit murder, for which he must die!"

"True—very true, Horatio; but, determined as I am on other matters and at other

times, I am very weak now. But to the will of the Almighty I submit. I promise not to interfere. You have satisfied me that it is no woman's business, and, during the time that it engages your minds, I must be released from your consultations, unless justice demands my duty. And remember, Horatio, that were he completely at bay, to inflict a deadly injury on you and Charlotte, he would declare himself to the world your uncle!—possibly assert a thousand infamous stories, to leave behind as a final legacy."

"Well, Ellen, that we could not avert. Our trust is in God and our fair fame. Come what will, we must rely on Him; in His hand is the power; and the evil you dread may by His wisdom be averted. And, now, good night. Mind secrecy, or my death may be your consolation."

She retired with one upcast look of agony —"Never!"

After dinner, on the day following that on which the above conversation took place, Mr.

Deedes and Dr. Howard slipped into the room.

"Whence come you?" I hailed.

"From the eastward," replied the doctor.

"Well, have you piped to dinner?"

"Oh, yes! Deedes knows where good chops, steaks, and porter are to be had; and won't I tell his wife."

"Come, then, pass the bottle—what adventures?"

"Well, that I leave to Deedes." He commenced:—

"This, gentlemen, is a greater business than we expected, that we humble individuals would have to deal with. The law officers of the Crown have *secretly* interfered, and it will very much depend on you, sir, how the affair shall be conducted."

"Well, Mr. Deedes," I replied, "if the Crown interferes to spoil my game, let them do their own work. If I am to pursue my own course, well. But, mark me, no combination, no sucking my nest-egg."

"That is precisely the advice of our counsel. It is an interference on the part of Crown lawyers to take the credit to themselves."

Sir Charles bowed, and said—"Well! I do entirely agree with you; and, perhaps, I am to blame for divulging so much as I have done. But be assured, Mr. Horatio, that they are as much in the dark as they were six months ago. Now, sir, put your counsel into communication with me—write a note instantly—I know the value of time—tell him to be with me at *ten precisely*—and no further difficulty shall be *known*. The firmness you have exhibited, sir—bowing—only satisfies me that the note the minister exhibited to me today, merely justified the high opinion of the Earl of St. Vincent. How he came to have it so *àpropos*, is curious."

The note was written, and the messenger—Noble's faithful—desired "to *see* the counsel, in whatever part of the *world* he might be, and *bring back a reply*." "Aye, aye, sir!" struck upon an old chord. *Diana* herself

would have raised her head had she been asleep.

Noble now interposed.—"Come, my hearties, have you anything to hoist out, or shall we go to comfortable Cove?"

"Well," Deedes continued, "but patience—you naval men go ten miles to our one."

"I say knot," repeated Noble. "Get on, Deedes—never mind that boy."

"Well, as the case stands, it is proposed not to disturb your uncle at present, but to watch him too closely to admit of escape, and to find out the gang with which he is connected, the chief, and their resources. All this can be done; but the train leads very high; and the question is, if it be conducted by Government, whether they will have courage to strike home, to show complicity, or so mutilate the affair, that the offenders will laugh at them. Now, we propose to make no laughing matter of it; but so to frighten these noble gentlemen, by the association with their parties, that they may amuse themselves on the

continent until their absence is no longer ex-expedient. We know we cannot touch them beyond that; but that would be a triumph to the Government which they would appreciate."

Sir Charles observed:—

"Well, gentlemen, suppose you effected all this, would the government be jealous, or not? Aim at nothing higher than the first objects. The conviction of those two individuals—the absconding of marked confederates, and that will serve all the purposes of government. The retirement of parties involved will be a natural movement; no one will notice it, but the Government generally pretty well knows when sudden passports are required. Excuse my advice, but they have sharp eyes, and are very jealous."

This I thought prudent—so did my uncle. But Noble was inclined to stop at nothing short of accomplishment. However, I notified that I should abide entirely by the tone of Sir Charles's opinion.

Deedes thought it 'very safe—very prudent;' and so that matter was determined.

During the evening, the emissary returned from Clapham Common, where he had chased; the counsel came up with him, exchanged despatches, intimating obedience.

The machinery, the proceedings—all are too voluminous for this work, which is now more terrestrial than maritime, thanks to the peace; but all these matters bear so strictly on my promotion and the termination of my career, that my readers must take the good with the bad, and, should their interest flag, ship that which is monotonous.

A day involved pages—but I will leap one week.

At the expiration of the week we were again assembled. Our meeting for business was fixed after tea, when the ladies had retired—and this would be early.

Sir Charles commenced by stating that the Crown watched the proceedings, with the full concurrence of stepping in when our counsel reached the criminal pitch, and the evidence had been brought to a point which simply

bore on the civil case, reserving to themselves the criminal information on which he had virtually been captured—and of which, on our side, our counsel was cognizant.

Mr. Deedes then followed by stating that until the case reached this point and formed a chain of complicity in fraud, they did not like to alarm the supposed security of the league, but would allow them to flounder on; that my uncle was confident — had powerful interest—talked of upsetting all my claims—had a strong phalanx of legal talent, and confidently expected victory.

The doctor now informed us, "That the brother of my mother would, as the case proceeded, exhibit himself, take a leading part, and probably produce the stolen deeds. And that it was then proposed to request his committal on crimes to be set forth by the attorney-general.

Mr. Deedes now made us acquainted, also, with some further movements. Burnham Hall would be contested, and a new claimant sus-

pected to belong to this gang, would contest all the Brenton Estates, defying even our sporting dog friend near the Hall. Daily they became more audacious For the crown-lawyers, acting in entire concurrence with my solicitor, had considered it advisable to relax their exertions, for a time, in every possible manner, in order to draw on the enemy, and I was considered, by them, even now as beneath all terms of accommodation.

CHAPTER II.

When I look back upon this period of my life I am a little disgusted at finding how completely absorbed I was in my own affairs, and how thoroughly I blotted out, as it were, the rest of the world from my memory. Now and then, however, a little circumstance would occur to remind me that this great world of hills and valleys, and mighty oceans, of terrible woes and exquisite delights, of vast nations and eternal destinies, was not created merely to be a theatre for Horatio Howard Brenton, and the circumstances arising from his grandfather's will.

Business had taken me one evening to the

Borough, and as I was returning rather late across one of the bridges, I yielded to the inclination which is felt by almost every one, to lean over the parapet to watch the current rushing below, and to gaze on the distant levels of the water far away through the mist. It was with difficulty that I raised my eyes from the tidal flood beneath, for it had a horrible fascination, appearing in the lurid light of the far bridge lamps like a mass of up turned human faces, white with deadly agony. * *

When, at length, my eyes, shrank from this horrid spectacle, they fell on a shot tower on the Southwark side of the bridge, and which stood in the night air like a strong man, dark, and stern, and full of passion. I had heard that the work in that shot tower never ceased day nor night, and it was fine to remember, now that it was long past midnight and all the great city around me was asleep, that the molten metal still rushed through that giant mass, quick, and fiery; hot as the blood of passion through the veins of a woman

of the South. So I leant on the parapet of the bridge and gazed on the dark tower, and marked the summer lightnings coming forth to it in all their beauty from the clouds, like the handmaidens to an eastern king.

With the first grey light of dawn, the rain began to fall heavily, and I was driven from my post to seek out such shelter as I might, and I had not left the bridge long before I found it in one of those great archways which are so frequent in the city, generally leading to some old-fashioned inn, or gigantic warehouse. As soon as I had shaken the rain from my hat and coat I made a survey of my place of refuge, and found that I was not its only occupant; I need scarcely say of what class the woman was who crouched there from the inclemency of the weather at that time of night, in a dress of mingled rags and finery. At one moment she seemed about to address me, but either her manifest warnings or something of deep compassion in my look withheld her, and drawing with a clutch that was

evidently nervous and involuntary, her shawl a little closer around her, she leant against the wall and silently gazed out upon the night. A drop of rain or a tear wetted my eyelash, and I began to speak to her. There was a pleasant country accent in her voice. As she spoke the true expression of her countenance returned, and I saw that she must once have been exceedingly pretty. She told me her story, and it was rather different from the generality of such stories.

"He was a clergyman, and he talked to us of religion, and he talked well, and gave us new ideas, such as we never had before, and made the world and everything seem different to us. He used to teach us prayers, so beautiful that I loved to say them by myself at any time in the fields when the larks were singing, and when I awoke at night. . . . . No! I did not begin to love him because he was so good. I was already in love with one whom I had known from childhood. Oh! mercy—mercy! . . .

I frequently met this man, of course, in the woods and the lanes in the neighbourhood; and I was always glad, for he could then talk to me alone and more earnestly of that religion of which my heart was almost brimming full. At length, the golden glow which was usual to his face when he spoke, began to give way to an expression of anxious pensiveness, and his words became fewer, but still deep and sweet and as though all his soul were in them. I don't know how it was, but I noticed this change when no one else noticed it, and it caused me to feel a kind of compassion which seemed as much for myself as for him. . . . And so it went on, that at length when we met together alone, it was I, and not he who spoke, and he listened with clasped hands and downcast eyes.

"Thus time went on, winter and summer, and slowly the dreadful secret came from him to crush me! . . . He did not believe! He had never believed! All that he had uttered had been mere words! The universe

was a blank to him! All his life had been a lie! It was not all at once that I learned this; but I refused to receive it—I refused to be conscious of it; I cast it from me as the suggestion of some horrible demon, till one autumn evening, when he flung himself down before me, and hid his face in my lap, and told it me all. And the red leaves were on the ground, and the red leaves on the trees, and the blue stars in the purple sky; but I felt as though there were no God in the wood, nor in the world, nor anywhere! And if religion, that had been a part of my being, were nothing, what, then, was love, that had been a part of my life? And if love were nothing, what, then, was anything good? Was it not all a blank darkness?

"We seemed to be desolate in the universe, he and I, and it was then I fell!"

All the time that the girl had been speaking, her voice had fallen upon my ear as one that it knew, and when, as she ceased speaking, she stepped forth into the morning light,

I recognized in her, with horror and dismay, the belle of the village, with whom I had opened the ball some years since, on the day of the foundation of the Brenton Schools.

She recognized me as soon as I uttered her name, and fled down the street, wildly, and far too swiftly for pursuit.

CHAPTER III.

One of the most remarkable circumstances respecting the proceedings of my wicked uncle, consisted in the fact of his obtaining the most excellent information respecting intended government measures, and complete information respecting all my own plans. But at the same time my advisers were equally on the alert, and we were tolerably well aware of all that he and his gang were doing or proposed to do.

I scarcely understood forty years ago, and I certainly cannot pretend to describe now,

the exact legal features of the case which was being patched up against me by my unscrupulous relative; but I remember that it was founded on the possession by him of certain deeds, which he had stolen from his father, and that it was the want of one small deed alone, which he had omitted to take, which prevented his triumphant success.

From the information which we were enabled to obtain, at a great expense, of the movements in the enemy's camp, we learned that the most desperate endeavours were to be made to obtain possession of this document; and, indeed, two burglarious attempts had already been made on Mr. Deedes' house under circumstances which left little doubt that this paper was their object. It had been thought advisable, therefore, that it should be transferred to my custody for greater security. It is probable that many of my readers may blame me for giving these details, and thus throwing a slur on my family name, but they are absolutely necessary to the completion of

my story, and all I can do is to treat them as briefly and as lightly as possible.

When I reached home after the sad little adventure narrated in the last chapter, it was broad daylight, although still very early, and I was, therefore, less surprized than I should otherwise have been at finding the street door ajar. Old sea habits frequently drove Noble to take an early sniff at the morning air, and his having left that door open was but a slight instance of his usual boyish carelessness in all but what regarded his professional duties. I crept up stairs as stealthily as possible, in order to avoid disturbing any light sleeper in the household, and entered my chamber to be transfixed with amazement at beholding a man turning over the papers in my desk.

It was the man I had stumbled against in the wood years ago; it was the man who had made that strange midnight visit to Ashdown Rectory; it was my merciless persecutor—my

wicked uncle, Henry Brenton! The tiger instinct was strong within us both as we exchanged one long, stedfast look. The aggravated fear and hate of more than a score of years was within us, and we grappled together with deadly fury. But the struggle was not long; the household was aroused. Noble and Lofty both happened to be staying in the house, and came to my assistance, and the fierce, bad man was soon transformed into the harmless, crouching criminal.

He appeared to have more dread of Captain Lofty than of anyone else, and to him alone addressed such observations as he made.

"Do you intend to show any mercy? For I know you too well; but you have forgotten me since we were youths together and friends!"

"Such mercy, sir, as the law can grant and consistent with the peace of society, you may expect. None, if you presume to call me *friend!* I do know you well. Your life has been from childhood to the present moment, of

the viper breed—even as a child. Do you remember ——"

"Stop!—in mercy, stop!—I will be silent."

The doctor entered.

"There, sir, is a disguise. Cease to disgrace an honourable profession, by assuming a military dress. (He wore a military frock). This warrant commits you to prison, and may you make your peace with God. My brother will not be ashamed to render you his humble services."

He was folded in a cloak; a loose cap substituted for the military one. The door opened, and this high-mettled fellow crouched and quailed, under the servant's gaze, getting, with two constables, into the chair which conveyed him to prison.

Here was a scene!

The next morning, after breakfast, Captain Lofty inquired of Ellen her wishes as to the treatment of the prisoner. I give her own words.

"The fate, or prosecution of the prisoner, can form no part of woman's opinion. The

laws are enacted for the safety and welfare of the community, in the making of which, you know, we are not consulted. The question which concerns me and this family is, how can we secure this person from harming himself, or others, consistent with law?"

"The captain informs us, and there can be no doubt that such is the case, that his vicious habits have grown through life. It is, therefore, my opinion, that he might be permitted to reside in some foreign country, on a settled allowance, to be forfeited for ever, if it be proved that he either molests any of this family, directly or indirectly, by word, deed, acts, or agents, or sets foot on British ground.

"That draws his teeth," said Captain Noble; "and might I add, that unless he prove his actual residence from time to time, as in the case of pensions, to proper authorities, by us duly appointed, that he be liable to detention *there* for the money advanced by the parties there, until due notice be sent here—the entire transaction to be guaranteed here."

"Well," said Captain Lofty, "that is a tether I never should have thought of. You would cause him to be responsible, as a debtor, for six months advanced, until it was nominally paid in."

It was decided that the case should be submitted to the best legal advice, and that, on his signing all papers required for the voidance of suits pending against me or the trustees of my late father, that a moderate stipend, to be increased according to behaviour, should be settled on him, subject to such conditions as might be hereafter agreed upon.

All our interest was used with the government to permit my uncle to leave the country, without molestation on account of his political offences. All our party were saved from giving evidence, and my name was scarcely known in the transaction.

But some of the spawn yet remained; the funds, however, were not then forthcoming, and process was stayed.

Modesty is always to be admired, but that

of my expatriated uncle's legal friends certainly exceeded anything I had imagined. They submitted, that with my income I could afford to liquidate their claims on my uncle, which did not exceed £5,000! I referred them to my solicitor. This cut off all further correspondence, and somewhat confounded the hopes of the evil brood dependent on them for guidance in future operations.

* * * *

Shortly after this, I had the honour of dining with the Foreign Minister, where I met Sir Charles the two Lords (first and naval) of the Admiralty, the Attorney-General, and other public men. It was very formal; some few observations were extended to me, and it was intimated that I should shortly have a command, and probably be sent to the West Indies—"Merely," as Sir Charles whispered, on the way home, "to give you the other step, and give your vessel to some favourite."

This was deferred until after Christmas.

In the meantime, Captain Lofty having in the course of a journey through Norfolk, taken a liking to the county, and wished, if I could make it convenient, to become my tenant, somewhere within a comfortable day's travel between my grandfather's and Noble's estate; the matter was referred to Ellen and Mr. Deedes, and a very nice estate—although closer, perhaps, than he would have selected, happening just then to fall in—he closed at once, and the trio started off to take possession. Resistance here showed its head, but Deedes was a good general, and he came fully prepared. It was clearly a sub-tenant, who had got in by the *gang* influence; he was recognized by a constable especially employed to take him, and, twenty-four hours later, found a very different bed! It seemed that persecution and resistance were to attend my course through life. Of what value is fortune under such drawbacks?

The house and farm, gardens, greenhouses, were all in want of repair, but the plants valuable. "Now, Captain Lofty, if this will

suit, and you like my terms—good—I am not going to insult you or trifle with your feelings, but I think I may consult my own interests."

"Howard, I like the place, it suits—name your terms. Business requires no compliments, and you know me too well to trifle."

"Well, I have turned the matter over in my own mind. If you had not taken it I would have placed everything in the most perfect repair before I let in another tenant.

"That would have cost me infinite trouble, anxiety, and exertion of intellect. Will you undertake to do this, simply as my tenant, and make Deedes, here, pay the bills? It would be done otherwise by me, in a very unsatisfactory manner. The property would be improved, I should be benefited, and if you retired I might take a fancy to live here.

"If you would add wings, call one mine, the other Charlotte's, Noble's, Ellen's—thus making us independent, possibly you would gratify us all."

"Well, Howard, I think I see your purpose.

You wish to furnish me with amusement and a mode of gratifying my building fancy. You wish the family when they come home to have a perch. I see no objection to gratify you. And proud as some people deem me I will be your agent in this matter provided that if it suits me to go beyond this, you will not interfere in my buildings &c."

"Agreed. Put your chalk on the door."

A very careful scrutiny of the house was made. It was well built, but nearly all the skirtings, stairs, &c., were in a sad rotten condition; flooring defective; indeed, a thorough refit was requisite. However, he agreed that all this could be deferred until summer—when he had promised to visit Noble, and he could ride over daily to inspect the progress.

CHAPTER IV.

I ALLUDED some time since to the probable removal of the Rev. Dr. Howard to a better rectory, and the presentation of Ashdown Vale to my old schoolmaster, Dr. Johnson. This change now took place, and I cannot better introduce the subject, than by repeating what I said, as Noble and I stood on the rectory steps, awaiting his arrival.

"Noble, you do not know this good creature yet; I owe all my comfort in this life, after Ellen, to him. He spared the rod and saved the child; one blow, and my spirit, even my good feelings, might have been crushed for

ever. For every stripe inflicted without judgment, by a schoolmaster, set off revenge, cruelty, want of discretion; like bleeding a patient, the effect is experienced at a later date. And now let us find him." He was engaged with my aunt, and soon understood my signal, when we retired to my sanctum.

I lost no time in showing the old gentleman over the house, and said, "Now, Dr. Johnson, I hope you are ready to take charge. Now you have seen the rectory, and does it require repair or alteration?"

"To say that it requires the slightest change, would convict me of bad taste."

"Well, then, it has been the practice, my dear sir, in our family, to meddle more in these matters than customary. The furniture belongs to the house; it was withdrawn for legal reasons; that must be replaced, and you must take it according to our form, from the hands of Dr. Howard, complete, with the income in advance."

He bowed very low, and felt, I thought,

oppressed; but concluded, "Sir, your kindness may frame laws—with gratitude I submit —but I hope that I have heard the extreme limit of your extreme liberality."

The good little man looked down a few moments, and then said, "Sir, one favour I think you have overlooked. It was your custom to visit me; you promised to summon me if you could not. Surely, sir, you will come some day, and see if your wish to render me happy has been attended with success."

"That I will, Dr. Johnson."

Noble exclaimed, "I have not been invited."

"But, sir, he quickly returned, you are an *alter ego,* and therefore—

"No names, Dr. Johnson, give us your hand," and one of his heavy nips brought tears into the poor doctor's eyes.

As the doctor left the room, I observed, "These *vices* of yours, Noble, should be paid off with the ship. I shall hint to Charlotte to buy you some emollient soap, before she leaves town."

"Very good, young fellow, your gripe is pretty smart, too, but the heart is connected so intimately with the wrist and fist, that there is no accounting for impulses.

"Now, young fellow, it is my turn to lecture, and I think it will surprise myself more than you, if I do not get 'in irons.' Well, it has been hinted to me, that you were not *known* at a late party in town. Guess why!"

"Indeed, I cannot. Have I done anything wrong?"

"That, sir, I leave to your own conscience. But, sir, it is for the deeds undone you are doomed, with myself, too, to suffer! To cut the matter short, we have not paid our respects at court!"

"Well, Noble, that is true, and affects you more than myself. We will, if I am in England, go together. It is yet probable that I cannot do so until I get my next step. But I should very much like going under your convoy."

"Very likely," with one of his ludicrous

grins, "the blind leading the blind. No, we must enlist under Lofty."

Such was London etiquette in 1817, with many more absurdities. Unless a man had bent his knee, inclined his head, and touched his lips to perfumed, gouty royalty, he was not eligible in certain society. The ladies of creation, however long his purse, barred him out. Yes, even their own lords, too—at a certain place called Almacks, where dancing men exhibited themselves for inspection.

* * * *

And as I have touched on such subjects, I must warn my fair readers not to fancy, because I do not sprinkle my memoirs with descriptions of balls and other festivities, that I was wanting in all the lighter feelings. No; I was, perhaps, too light hearted; but memory thickens the ink now, and, unless the heart guides the pen and warms the fluid, it cannot flow—and, as was its custom, dwell on the enjoyment of a ball.

Then, I do remember thefts—but almost

pressed—of gloves, fans *to mend*, flowers, &c., &c.; but I contrived always to escape with my heart. My eyes were very bright, very, very clear and very sharp. If I once drifted down the stream and neared the precipice, some other flower on the bank seemed purer, and I sought it until I found myself safe on shore, and found that it was merely a daisy; the precipice scared me, and I sought more exciting occupation.

It required great exertions to put Ashdown Rectory into a proper state for the reception of the new rector, within the few days I proposed to spare for this purpose, but—what cannot London tradesmen do? And that not as vulgarly imagined, by bribery. No! give every man his due. They have their high feelings, perhaps, nobler than many of their employers. Gratitude works more wonderfully than money. Large orders with small, but sure, honest profits is the motive power. Trust to them—limit your order—do not bewilder a man by a discretion which he

cannot understand—and all parties will, in nine cases out of ten, be gratified. Such was the case at both the rectories. Such my experience through an excited life!—and the result is what? I never have changed a tradesman of any description—from my first small purchases to those necessary to my present rank!

Preparations at Ashdown Vale complete—at five, off we go to Norfolk, my Indian uncle very loth to let me leave him, and saying, "Horatio, recollect every hour wasted when I might enjoy your company, is an injury inflicted on me." I pressed his hand, and time flew fast—and so did the horses—we reached Burnham Hall that night.

Next day we all went to work at, what was now, the Reverend Doctor Howard's new rectory. Maids of all sizes were laboriously washing decks. Oh! how I wished for four hours' good holy-stoning with our own *Dianas* to cut down those knots and make the floors level. 'Well, thought I to myself, but aloud

—"what a dirty set must have inhabited this house."

"Quiet Horatio. Any house with the carpets up exhibit all this filth." Just then, Louisa came with a message, Ellen turned me over to her, and she commenced, not knowing the subject of our conversation. "Well, sir, if I may be so bold as to guess, you are just now thinking of that hammock-man, that other nurse of yours, and the beautifully clean decks of the *Diana*."

"Well that is true, Louisa, but will you not agree, with me, that sand and hearth-stones or Bath-bricks would be preferable?"

"Come along, you teaze—" and she pointed out, that all the stairs, where the carpetting would not cover them, were being *treated* with pumice-stone and water by the London *men*—she vanished. "Well," thought I (to myself), "this they learned from us, at all events—since the peace—" I even looked through their faces to find an old *Diana!*

At dinner I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of a young architect, named

Decimus Leo—a lively, intelligent young man, apparently not so old as myself—but quick and wonderfully rapid in grasping his materials—crunching them, as it were, in his hand, and from the chaos—in a few moments, making a new structure rise graceful, simple, and inexpensive under his gifted pencil.

It almost infected me with a building mania —but I was otherwise bent—I certainly invited him to visit the old Brenton Hall and let me know how that could be extricated from its solemn nonentity. That was done on paper only. He thought, with me, that an explosion of gunpowder only could retrieve the grounds from such an incubus. Before we retired to rest, some idea had been formed of the improvements, and at breakfast, much to the surprise of everyone, an elegant light-tinted cottage *orneé*, adapted too for a large family, was framed and glazed, appended to the curtains. It was clear to my mind that he had brought the frame, stretched paper, &c., down with him and had not slept. I

was satisfied, and desired its completion. It pleased those most interested—and workmen were measuring and planning for the spring before we left that night for London.

Noble was half-bitten, but he was sensible enough to be pleased with his own very substantial mansion—stately, commanding, but not at all in the cottage line. I heard him mutter to Charlotte—"Well, one fool, &c."

I visited Emelie Lodge with Captain Lofty and Fanny, and saw the works laid out, and then betook myself to the gardens. These did not seem to take the taste of the captain so much; flowers and greenhouses were the utmost stretch, but here was a fine grapery, peach, and nectarine house, with very extensive kitchen garden and orchard, all running to ruin.

"Well, Horatio," he said, "what is your idea about this?"

"I do not like interference," I observed; "but I should be sorry to see years of care thus lost. If it does not interfere with your

views, might this be called my garden, and let the perfect establishment be maintained at my expense. It would supply you, Noble, the Rector, and friends in town, as well as your neighbours, with many luxuries."

"Agreed; who will find gardeners, for that is quite out of my line?" Well, we will take our chance; but as it will require a gardener's house—Mr. Decimus Leo, will you contrive to keep it in tone with the cottage; indeed, by a shrubbery form a lodge-gate."

"Capital!" cried Lofty, "why you will inoculate me soon. It will mask all that dirty-looking farm-yard and outhouses, which prevent any one from venturing down these walks."

"Two years hence," said Mr. Decimus Leo, "you will fancy yourself in a wilderness with no want of water, for, on examination of the levels, I find you are situated so far below the springs, rivulets, &c., that a very fair trout stream will pass close to you, and pure spring water be carried above the house-level. In-

deed," he added, "with less expense than ever attended any place I have had to deal with, this place, simply by the employment of your poor parishioners, may gradually, solely by the judgment of the occupant, become one of the most perfect places I know, and everything done here benefits immensely the fine estate of Mr. Horatio Howard below, which he has never examined, and which, when vacant, I am sure he will hesitate to lose. It is a kingdom compared to the puny affair of Brenton Hall."

"Pray, Mr. Leo, how am I to see it Do you know the parties?"

"I do, sir. The present holder, Mr. Gore, is there by appointment to see me to-day. I told him I was sure you would take it, and he will not lay out any more money. If you will permit me, I will introduce you, for I know his anxiety to become acquainted, also with Captain Lofty. You will excuse my saying that I thought you would be there at one o'clock."

We bowed assent, got into the carriage, and as we crossed the first stream about eighty feet below the level, Mr. Leo observed—

"At this gate the property commences, we will pass through it if it suits your convenience, and return by another road to Burnham Hall."

"We are under your pilotage, Mr. Leo."

"Now, sir, count the streams we pass. Are you fond of fishing?"

"I am," I observed, "of good trout fishing, and sometimes cod on the banks of Newfoundland."

The captain smiled.

"They are large fish, I believe, but, sir, water is gold to my eye. No landscape lives without water—and the sea I worship. Who can visit Italy without loving water?"

"Have you been there?—very lately, surely?"

"No! in 1815. I was then a travelling companion of my friend, by whom I was introduced to Captain Lofty."

"Yes, he told me so," replied the captain.

"Now, sir, this is the fifth stream, crossing all the same, meandering through those clumps with three leaps from five to nine feet. Now be prepared for a beautiful view."

A large piece of water, into which tongues of wood projected, but now void of foliage, presented itself; an island, bridge, and apparent bathing houses, opened—even in winter highly beautiful—and beyond, on a gentle rise to the right, with lawn to the lake, a very simple, plain-built, substantial house, with conservatory wings, and long, extended colonnades from the portico exhibited the back view of the mansion. The road passed to the left, and, sweeping through the farmyards, gardens, &c., led by a gate attached to the stable department into the sweep up to the front entrance. A handsome portico house, stuccoed in front, and five wide steps led to the door level, affording ample shelter, being glazed on the sides between the columns, and having an outer glazed door. It was, in fact, an outer hall for the visitors' servants.

We had been seen from the rear, and a maid servant let us in without ringing. Mr. Gore receiving us at the hall, and apologising for the absence of servants in London. In a neat little study we found luncheon prepared, and were introduced to a very interesting pet daughter, 'his general companion,' although his family was large.

He had a noble, commanding air, resembled Sir John of our service, but his features were more prominent, his eyebrows bushy, and grey predominated on the temples. His daughter was a fit type of himself in proper proportion.

"Very happy to see you at last, Mr. Brenton, or Howard—which do you prefer, for one cannot pry into family secrets?"

"Why," I replied, "my intimate friends call me Howard. Brenton I find myself compelled to retain; but as no law attaches to anything but my signature, I should be happy, if I am not overstepping the terms I hope may henceforth subsist between us, to be called 'Howard.'"

"Thank you, I am your debtor"—and he placed his card in my hand, adding—"I hope London does not dissolve friendships."

I bowed.

"And now let me show you the house and grounds—yours, I may call them, whenever it suits your convenience—although I have yet five years to run. But to be plain with you, for I see I should lose mine, as well as waste your time, by any beating about the bush, (I hope, too, foreign to my nature.) It is, with my great family, increasing wants, servants, and expenses, more than I can satisfactorily keep up and do justice to, according to the terms of the lease. Mr. Leo is now here on the matter of repairs, and some alterations, which, I think, will benefit the estate, and eventually prove beneficial to you."

"Come, Mr. Gore, I must impertinently take up your own words. I do not beat about the bush; a weight hangs on your heart, another hangs on mine. Consent to my terms."

"Name them, sir."

"Continue to hold this estate to the end of your lease. Consult my interests, in any improvements or decorations, &c., fulfilling the strict intention of the lease; submit them to me, through Mr. Decimus Leo, and deduct them from the rent. This, sir, is honourable justice, cannot touch your pride, improves the property, and happens to suit a peculiar caprice of Horatio Howard. Come, give me your hand," and the pride oozed out at his fingers' ends. We shook hands cordially.

"You are a rare landlord, sir; better treat with principals than lawyers, and pay them too pretty roundly for work mangled. Come along." Miss Gore absconded, the fire had been too sharp for her nerves, but he seemed fidgetty without her, and asked Mr. Leo to show us over the house until he rejoined.

At this period there were no good rooms in England, a room of forty feet was pointed out to me as immense. Everything required my uncle's eye—too massive, gaudy, in the way,

obstructing light, but easily remedied. Mr. Leo, read me attentively. Catching his eye, I asked, "Have you that power?"

"What, sir," rather taken a-back.

"Of reading *me*, as I am reading you"

He laughed immoderately. "How strange. There, you know my thoughts. Continue to read, and we will see at a future day, some ten days hence, perhaps, if you understand what you have read."

"Agreed."

From the house, we proceeded to the grounds, gardens, hot-houses, &c. Mr. Gore drew a long breath, and observed "that the situation here did not repay the trouble of attendance. The smoke, leaves, and everything from the higher grounds injures our fruit. Captain Lofty's place always kept ahead of us; it possesses the advantage of a more perfect southern aspect and protection, with a much greater circulation of air, but we suck out all the juices of his land to feed our streams, keep the meadows in the richest order, and

below we have deposit beds, after the Chinese fashion, where huge eels luxuriate, and which furnish all the black loam, the gold, I may say, of the kitchen garden, and rough dressing for some land. Except, in accordance with the provisions of the lease, no manure has been used, and that solely on the upper lands, during our holding, some forty years. This reminds me, that our neighbour here—I do not know him—has been trying to learn particulars, and fancies he will come in for this property, if you decline the name of Brenton. I have not given him any reply, but referred him to your solicitor. If *you* fail, the *power* of *purchase*, by the deed, rests in *me*, the money to revert to a Miss Ellen Percy, or her heirs, assigns, &c.; and I am given to understand, from my own friends, that all the estates are so guarded, and the terms are too good to be despised; not that I should purchase for myself, but as a matter of lucrative transfer."

"Pray, Mr. Gore, how many rooms, exclusive of servants, does the house contain?"

"Why, sir, in my father's time, when the family only numbered two boys and two girls, exclusive of nurseries, &c., we accommodated eight families of pairs, some few girls and boys, and their servants. I consider that sixteen good bed-rooms for married couples are available; and that is as many as any prudent man can collect in amity," smiling at something which occurred to his mind, and which the pet-daughter seemed to comprehend.

We now took our leave, promising to renew the acquaintance in town, and leaving Mr. Leo to look to business, his gig having followed us, we returned home by the great entrance, where a very imposing pair of lodges sustained handsome iron folding as well as side gates. We stopped to inspect the lodges. One was solely devoted to living, the other to cooking, pet poultry, &c.

Our road carried us past the Rectory, where

we found the ladies still engaged and habited for work.

"Where have you been, you truants—confess?"

"No, not until after dinner. Come, you have made progress, and it does look somewhat more like a ship of war."

Louisa looked very pert and said—

"Oh! Miss Ellen, we never shall get on if we are teazed so much about this ship-shape —ship order—holystoning—washing decks. Why, ma'am, I shall examine my feet to-night, for he tells me I shall become web-toed if he lives much longer with us."

"Well," replied Ellen, "he is very teazing, but you have known him longer than I have, and must have borne more than I have; I fancy that you would rather prefer this teazing than he should be at sea. For my part, I am now so accustomed to it, that I shall get Mr. Oliver to take his place when he goes."

Little did she dream how that shot told. I

saw the confusion and was about to speak when Louisa said—

"Well, I won't listen to you, sir," and she vanished.

CHAPTER V.

We staid in Norfolk only over one Sunday; and, on the following Tuesday, Charlotte and Noble, Ellen, myself, Louisa, and servant, with four horses, found ourselves in Grosvenor Square, with my Indian uncle, very fidgetty awaiting us. Even this short absence had left its mark. Company he must have; and Ellen now promised me, with Charlotte, either to entice him to them or to stay with him.

After dinner he seemed to breath more freely, and observed,

"This lonely life, in such a barn, will destroy me. Some one must come here or I

must go to them or the churchyard—and that is not, I fear, far distant."

It occurred to me, that Mr. Gore might be known to him, but he observed, "That he might if they met, but that men changed their names, or people forget each other easily when their routes lay so wide asunder."

I mentioned our meeting and arrangement. The caution of age, however, mastered his generous feelings. "Doubtless, Horatio, I should have done the same. But you should beware. Your generosity there led you into trammels."

"True, my dear uncle. But here I saw the heart. I had a gentleman before me with character at stake. He told me all, laid bare to me his weakness. Could I do otherwise?"

"I think not, I am sure you did right—and if you find me such an old friend, as you have sketched, let me judge for myself to-morrow, for I get very greedy of time. You cannot tell how avaricious of *time* I am becoming—but money—that's all your's—

and yet if it does not render you happier than me, of what avail! Why did I waste ten precious years in India—equal, at least, if well cared for, to twenty now! I am not so old, look at Sir Charles Harrison—but climate shortens our days and enjoyments fearfully."

I now diverted the conversation to his improvements, and hoped to be able to go through the houses, to-morrow, and arrange about our future quarters, This was amusement in prospect.

After tea, Deedes and Dr. Howard both slipped in without noise, and explained that they had still a very cautious game to play, that certain papers—looking at Noble and myself—which had been taken, compelled a strict search through Norfolk and the adjoining counties; and that several persons had fled—two more were captured—and a legal system of annoyance discovered, which affected many estates, and rendered those who had not money to contend against it wretched; and yet, men of high reputation were nominally engaged.

"Now is the time for some clever young barrister to make his fortune, by freeing the country from this gang of legal tricksters."

"Well," said my uncle—"here is a fine field, you say, but no honest lawyers! I have heard that bandied before; surely, you can put your hand on one. If we wanted one, where should we apply to but to you? Quick, sir, your reply. Time is valuable to me."

"If you require the man for a particular business, I submit to your approval the man adapted. Men vary, as cases."

"Now, sir, all that is clear. My nephew has commenced a good work. Do you think any man should step in and do the rest, and take the credit? Are you so conversant with the train, that you can counterplot and foil the explosions; or is it surmise, not based on legal grounds?"

Mr. Deedes drew breath and replied—"Sir, I never commit myself on surmise; the doctor can confirm that; our matter is not involved in suspicion; but, to meddle with the affairs

of others, requires weight, interest, money. If I make it apparent to the surrounding holders of leases that a system—the same, indeed, that is yet at work on the Brenton estates—is working against them ; if I promise to shield them, if they join in common defence against the league, I can find barristers to work, and, eventually, without loss to the Brenton estates. As we turn up one snake we find another ; and, unless prepared to deal with them all my life will not see the contention crushed. Give me one week's full power, and I will maim, if I do not entirely crush, the reptiles."

"Mr. Deedes," my uncle slowly replied, "I give you fourteen days. You may freely use my name, and that is also my nephew's—you have *carte blanche*."

"Do you accompany him, doctor ?"

"Yes, sir, I should wish to join, or he will find me at the rectory, near Burnham. I have meddled so much in this affair, that I have now a clear knowledge of the parties. Moreover, I

am empowered, under certain limits, to act as a magistrate."

"Bear in mind that my nephew is to be the director, and he will act for you when Government interference my be necessary. This has been already intimated by Sir Charles Harrison, owing to late affairs of which you think me ignorant. Do not be startled."

Noble wished to be engaged also; but Charlotte did not consent.

CHAPTER VI.

LEARNING from the fashionable intelligence in the *Morning Post*, that Mr. Gore and family had come to their town house, I lost no time in calling. I was introduced to seven daughters and three sons, and eventually to his wife. He certainly had selected the prettiest as his companion — most fathers do. Having informed him of my uncle's desire to see him, and of his peculiarities, he said—

"Emily, have I any engagement to day?"

"None, my dear; but every day next week—that is, from Wednesday to Wednesday you understand."

So, having endured eleven of the shaking-hand processes, I retired with Mr. Gore—who

lived in Grosvenor Street—and introduced him to my uncle.

That they knew each other was apparent; yet neither could recollect, but continued conversing on subjects familiar to each. At length, Mr. Gore inquired—

"Do you recollect a boy sent home with a fractured thigh?"

"Yes; he was a Gore, but he died—at all events, never returned."

"I am that Gore!"

"Strange!" repeated my uncle. "Can you identify yourself?"—hitching his pocket for some money. "Well, if you can, that belongs to you; it is yours *legally and honestly*," and he put three half-crowns into his hand. I owed you then seven shillings and sixpence."

"That, sir, is true; but I only knew you then as Oliver Howard."

"True; I had not then taken the name of Brenton. We are, truly, Howards."

Leaving them to settle their affairs, I went

to Ellen and Charlotte, to introduce them; but they insisted on his being brought upstairs.

"Horatio, you are in London," said Charlotte; "we must civilize you."

So I returned to my friends.

"Where are the ladies, Horatio?"

"Upstairs, waiting for you to finish your story."

"Come along, Mr. Gore; let us shake off formality. 'Time is precious;' I have adopted that motto. Let us go to these ladies, who will drag old people upstairs."

He was introduced to Mrs. and Captain Moreton Noble, nephew of our schoolfellow Moreton, now my nephew. "Miss Ellen Percy. (Who is is I cannot tell you; and I have only to add, that if you know, she will thank you to keep it secret.) Come, Ellen, I dare say you know Mr. Gore."

She smiled, curtsied, and said—"Yes, but I was an infant; he never could recollect me. You, sir, only know me by a talisman."

"The name, Miss Percy, we all have reason to know; for, if I mistake not, all our title deeds contain your name."

"Perhaps they do, Mr. Gore, so far as legal matters are concerned."

"Now," said my uncle "forgive my whims. The ladies will call on your family, and this evening, you and your travelling daughter will give us the pleasure of your company. If your wife won't come, for form sake, why, that pleasure must be deferred; but if she be as good a fellow as I take you to be, bring her too. Go, Ellen, and persuade her. Get out Horatio and Noble;" and he left us, Mr. Gore consenting and awaiting to escort the ladies.

Our visit was paid; she was taken aside by her husband—and in rather an ill-humour, I thought—but returned with brightness, indeed, beauty (how good nature embellishes!) in her countenance; and when Ellen asked her and the other Ellen to accompany Mr. Gore, she assured her that this was carrying

friendship home to the heart; they would be delighted—a cloud fell on the elders, and we shook hands—another twelve—and parted—Ellen opened fire.

"Come, Mr. Horatio, this is all your work; I must go to a surgeon to get my shoulder set; for the twelve-pump motions have quite upset me. We must go into the pastrycook's at Bond Street, and one or two other shops, before we return. Mrs. Gore is a nice woman; he is a fine man; but the children rather misty — whether they were angels or not, I could not see; but that they are of this earth, I do feel, even now. But was your travelling acquaintance there? I saw no elegance."

"I cannot tell—I think not. Who could select from seven so very nearly resembling a wedge or set of steps? One is tall, and would make a spare royal mast. But is it fair—is it right — Ellen, thus to dissect acquaintance before you hardly know them?"

"Well, Mr. Sage—as they commenced

operations on me by the attempt to dislocate my arm, I speak feelingly. I shall not dissect them nor your feelings!"

"Well, Ellen, this is only lent — I will retaliate hereafter."

"Then you do not forget and forgive?"

"No! I intend to be viciously cruel—so beware!"

I could perceive that she feared something, and that my words had a meaning for her incomprehensible. Our conversation flagged; the shopping was completed; and we returned home.

After luncheon, she took me to a sofa near the window, and said—"Now, Horatio, for your vengeance! What have I said to displease you?"

"Or my feelings," I replied. "Ellen, I had some plea for asking mercy on the poor strangers; in fact, that I was prepossessed in favour of the travelling pet. But having told you that, until I reach the age of twenty-five, this heart will not be touched by what

you term *love;* and, as I have commissioned you to find another self adapted to my notions, and that, until then, I do not marry—I think the delicacy I would extend to your slightest wish might be accorded to me."

"Well, I did wrong, Horatio, to use that mean way—if it did do so—of hurting or offending your feelings or fine sense of propriety."

"No more, Ellen.—You have said too much, you have punished me for appearing to hear it; but I thought it might go further, and so I stopped it, perhaps ill-naturedly. Now, what are we to do?"

"Come and help your uncle in his schemings for your happiness."

As we entered his side of the house, through the arch in the back drawing-room, we found him seated with Charlotte, consulting about the necessity of a mirror, to throw more light on the arch. Unfortunately, the fire-places, both being in the party-walls, destroyed the effect of light on one side; nothing but ano-

ther pier glass would obviate this, and in this, Ellen concurred, but not as a fixture, until the effect was tried, which she was of opinion, from the light received in the other drawing-room, would not be much more than barely appreciable. "How shall we determine," my uncle said.

"That can soon be done, here is a book with small print, place two chairs, I will sit in one, Charlotte in the other, under the centre of the arch, the difference of light will soon be detected.

It was tried, and my uncle was so well satisfied that it would be useless expense, that it was quashed. "Now, Horatio, learn a lesson here, try every rational expedient before you commit yourself to derision. Had that glass been purchased and placed, much as it might adorn the room, it still would be 'my poor uncle's foible,' Eh!"

"'A wise woman is a crown to her husband.'" (Wand.)

"I am sorry to see," he continued, "that

with all our studies, sanctums, libraries, &c., we have so very few books. Now that shall be my department. And how does it happen, Horatio, that all your studies are explosive—Chemistry—Mechanics—Gunnery—Astronomy—Mineralogy, every alogy and ology, but not elegies. Have you no taste for history, poetry, standard plays, classics? The best novels you can always hire, but some you should possess. Are you so complete a scholar, that you never refer to Dictionaries or Cyclopædias. Now, every morning, at breakfast, pray gratify me with a list, or of one or more books that you think may be useful. I would not, until you are settled, propose anything like a laboratory, tool-room, &c., there I should perhaps be found very often; but when you are posted, don't forget anything you have learned.—*Apropos*—Can you speak French fluently? and do you know anything of Spanish or German?"

"French I speak tolerably, Charlotte and myself read and talked Italian once; Spanish

and German I am anxious to, and must learn, as I am led to believe I have to visit the Spanish West Indies."

"Well, sir, so I can collect, and as time is precious I have thought for you;—a Spanish master will be here this afternoon, if he suits, to-morrow after breakfast you can commence. A German we must seek. Now, as to books, I am an old hand; no gay bindings, no *new books*, people fear to damage them. I will select a well-seasoned set, free from the *worm*, that is important. No purchases by square yards, or entire measurement, but fill the shelves as you get them, and handle them a little before they go to the shelves, then you know where your treasure is. It is astonishing how some of this kind of dirt sticks, and the more you handle the books, the more will stick. Now, the old man who watched my education, had a sly habit, so I afterwards found, of selecting '*talking subjects*,' and putting in slips, and leaving the book or books carelessly about, on the slips, I invariably found refer-

ences; which an inquisitive spirit led me to follow. Insensibly I became interested, and looked very anxiously after any new books, or new information, thus he robbed me of my leisure! So I propose here, a kind of daily study, discussing the value of the books as they arrive, volume by volume; and when known, we can give them their quarters, and enter them on the books alphabetically. What think you of this, Ellen, eh?"

"Oh! delightful; this will be rational, we will style you Dominie Oliver."

"Have a care, 'wise woman,' no names—truce, eh?"

"This is only my first lecture, we must think of living to ourselves and for ourselves, certain hours daily, then we shall not seek out of doors for objects to kill time."

Ellen asked to spare me a few moments, and calling me aside—"Do go to that bible shop, you know where, and order the similar set to those at the Rectory at once. I have arranged about the family-pew, and the rest will follow.'

This done, we prepared for a comfortable evening, I caught the doctor preparing to be off, called him a shabby fellow to be in London and absent himself; but his reasons were good, he would be here at dinner, but must still be mysterious and come down just at his own time, and in his own way.

Mr. and Mrs. Gore and daughter very neatly and plainly dressed,—no display of jewels,—dined with us, and we passed a delightful evening. The wife, a most elegant, engaging woman (when dressed for company), made a great impression on all; the daughter might have received more attention but for Ellen who monopolized her, and who now appeared worthy of the father's pride. Mrs. Gore, happening to allude to my taking the house in Norfolk rather as a relief, I observed—"That if we were to lose such neighbours, that it would go very hard against my going in."

"Oh! dear, do not let that weigh; perhaps you may find us still too close, as there is a troublesome person with a much smaller,

and to us more convenient, estate, who will soon vacate, and my husband has the refusal, or, indeed, I know little of such matters, perhaps, the right of taking it. I think it is by mortgage. No! our disappointment as well as that, I believe, now of the county—why, you best know, to us secret,—would be excessive, if you should not settle in it, and keep up the establishment as it was of old," and a shade passed over her countenance. "You will find us very quiet people indeed, everyone must be so, just now, for late occurrences have destroyed confidence, and no one visits a stranger until his character has been determined. We have, I learn, lost a very troublesome neighbour, and to your promptness in putting a better one in, we all feel very thankful. You have also from your own family given a new rector, of whom my letters speak in very warm terms, so you see I am not quite in the dark,—we see some bright spots in the future. Now do tell me who this Ellen Percy is. You cannot imagine how much I am in-

terested—not woman's curiosity—I am not so weak."

"Well, all I can tell you is, that it is a forbidden subject with her, and that if you succeed in learning from herself, well—but it seems it must be concealed from me. I dare not,—I fear to know."

"Strange," she said, "She is still very young, and I should think must be known to me. I was a great favourite of your grandfather, and she lived in his time. But with you I must speak no more on this subject. If we converse it must out."

"Well," I replied, "the knowledge of her secret might affect her friendship, and she is too valuable to any one to be lightly lost. She has been a mother to me."

"You? why she is not older."

"Many years—what her age may truly be I know not—but the affection of a mother I cannot forget."

"Still more enigmatical!"

"Now would you imagine her taller, more stately, than your daughter?"

"Certainly not," she smilingly inquired.

"And yet," I said, "if I offended her, she would tower a goddess. She is called the 'wonderful woman.'"

"Pray do not offend her, I see her eyes are on you—and such eyes!"

As a means of changing the conversation, I said, "Ellen, are you not taller than Miss Gore?"

"I think not, Horatio; but if it would gratify you, I would ask her to look into the glass with me, and then we should see"—I had not to ask again.

"Miss Gore, let us see which of the two Ellens is the taller, I am much stouter, of course."

Up they jumped, and Mr. Gore exclaimed, "Why Ellen you have grown shorter!"

"No, my dear," said his wife, "Miss Percy has merely overlooked her."

They sat down like two romping girls—and which was younger one could scarcely say, so

much had excitement and an affectionate feeling improved our Ellen, and I said, "Mrs. Gore is satisfied I was right?"

"Oh! yes," she exclaimed, "I would not be so rude as to say much taller; but my daughter must hide her diminished head"—and a very pretty one it was just then.

Mrs. Gore thought she was too mysterious a woman for our conversation, and turned to another subject.

"And I hear we are to lose you soon—you are likely to go to the West Indies. There I have friends, and to them I will give you letters, particularly to Vera Cruz, where the principle merchant is, I believe, my relative—Mr. Thom—He had a park in this neighbourhood, but he was too fond of money—that was his failing—and he sold it and went abroad to make more. I do not think I can promise you any lady acquaintance—I do not believe that they are foolish enough to trust themselves among the scorpions and taruntulas, which they send home in bottles to frighten us. I

wonder if they imbibe any of their poison. Only fancy a taruntula or scorpion husband—what an excellent subject for a pantomine; how they would make pantaloons and clowns jump."

"Why, really, Mrs. Gore, you must have a small touch of the poison imbibed by Lethe, who could dream of such torture to produce pleasure."

"Not more pleasure than red-hot pokers, pincers, bears, &c.—come, Mr. Moralizer; and these are the main ingredients, with kicks and slaps, which amuse even overgrown children."

"True; but I believe neither myself nor sister ever saw a second, if the first was truly one; nor do such scenes amuse me. I have been taught to look with something near contempt on practical jokes, and such like. The laugh, doubtless, would tickle me as much as any person, but it would be followed by a reflection that its indulgence

was beneath the dignity of a reasoning animal."

"Upon my word, Mr. Howard, we must stop your moralizing; you will make me look so demure presently, that the company will fancy our conversation is very interesting. Come, change places with Captain Noble; he is our neighbour, for certain, and I wish to make his acquaintance."

"Come, York, you are wanted."

I bowed, and we exchanged berths alongside Charlotte.

"Well, what have you turtles been after? Are you not ashamed to sit by your husband in this manner, all the evening?"

"Indeed, I am, and also of seeing you so wrapt up in Mrs. Gore. If I were her husband, I would know the meaning of all this, tomorrow morning."

"Oh, no, I think not, Charlotte, if I know *my sister*," bowing.

"Why, not, sir—my brother?"

"Because you would not wait until to-morrow morning; you would tease her life out before morning."

"Oh, Ellen, do keep this impertinent creature quiet! You are the only person to tame him. Say a few magic words."

"Upon my word, Charlotte, I think I must leave you to his cruelty, if you think fit to make me a sorceress. Bring her to reason, Horatio. Those are magic words."

"I understand, Ellen; I will *try;* but you know how very difficult that is, and I have used one magic word already. It is a truce, Charlotte."

"Yes, you are too strong for me; and when my husband leaves me, you give me no quarter. One of these fine days I shall catch you, and then. You got a hint to-day in Bond Street."

Thus ended our evening. But before parting, it was arranged that, on the return of Deedes, the doctor, and Captain Lofty, a party

should be arranged, including the Gores, Harrisons, and other friends, to keep up Twelfth-night. Sir Charles had spent his Christmas in the country, and the family would be settled by the end of the week.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE is a strange pleasure in re-visiting a former home, and it may be well imagined that Ellen and myself went down to visit my old schoolmaster, now installed at Ashdown Vale. We went on Saturday, and attended church on the Sunday. A most excellent sermon was preached by the rector, somewhat referring to the presence of the parishioners' best friends, and inculcating their necessity of proving themselves worthy characters before they were removed with the select fold of their older pastor, carrying the subject up to its highest relative bearing. The schools were visited—the customary gifts promised, the day follow-

ing—and intimation given, that if I should be absent, some authorized person would always carry out this practice, so long as they continued deserving — but no longer. This caution resulted from the fact that several had materially changed their opinions, become troublesome, and declared themselves of my uncle's party. To these misled men I said but few words. I gave them clearly to understand that they would be replaced when their leases expired. I saw that the blow was struck. It was effectual. The next morning the hardened had left, committing various thefts, and the others waited on the curate for advice!

The curate I was delighted to meet at dinner, and the village was again happy.

Mrs. Johnson was a most admirable selection—of good family—well educated—a companion and a complete parson's wife. Thus far all appeared happy. The lady had the pleasant task of dispensing the Christmas presents. The rector was requested to look

in time for a successor to the schoolmaster, as he would be removed with certain families—and we bent our way home. On our journey, I asked Ellen if she knew Mrs. Gore? that I was not asking an impertinent question; nor did I require any answer, if it did not suit her views. I thought it necessary to inform her that Mrs. Gore thought she must know her sooner or later—that she was herself a pet of my grandfather—and a sudden discovery might not suit Ellen's views.

"Thank you, Horatio; this kind forethought I fully appreciate. Your information is important; but not as you may suspect. Did Mrs. Gore intend this for my ear?"

"If I did not believe so, do you think I would have made the communication without her sanction? No; she will, I feel confident, seek an occasion to speak to you on the subject; and it occurred to me, that as all women are not so cautious as yourself, that an exclamation of discovery before other parties might not be pleasant."

"Thank you, Horatio! I must see Mrs. Gore before I return home."

As in music, so in conversation, the notes in termination are decisive, the last tone too of Ellen's music was always listened to with attention.

"Come," she said, "I know you expect it. I will tell you my opinion of my namesake: she is a nice, lively girl—very young in ideas—but sadly neglected in education. In so large a family, and without good governesses and good masters, the girls—unless the elders are first well educated and look after the others in succession—seldom improve.

"Marriage, I take it, is their object, but they will never shine as heads of families. That results from the education of the mother, and never having any decided part to play she has not energy sufficient even to take care of herself. That I read on our first visit by her *dress*. A woman should ever be, at all times, outside her dressing-room door, perfect; purer at the breakfast-table than at any moment of

the day, I mean in dress. Ready for all the trials of life, and independent of her waiting-woman. Such, Ellen Gore never can be."

"Thank you, Ellen; but if you mistook my admiration of the beautiful companionship of father and daughter, at all times touching, and never more so than at *one house* you visited (I see you understand me), you are entirely mistaken."

"Well, Horatio, had your heart gone where you allude, I should not have been surprised, but, perhaps, you knew that there was no room for you."

"I was too young to dream of such matters. I felt, perhaps, a brotherly affection, for I was treated as a son by the father."

We now entered London, and drove direct to Grosvenor Street. Mrs. Gore was at home and alone, ahd leaving the carriage there, I walked home.

The surprise of seeing me alone was great. But "I had left Ellen at the Gores, she would be here presently."

And "All right, I hope at Ashdown Vale?" inquired Charlotte.

"Oh! yes, excepting your absence to serve out coals, or blankets, &c. Mrs. Johnson did that for you."

"Oh! Horatio, do tell us what kind of a little body she is, for I have made up my mind that she must be a fairy."

"Well, somewhat the fairy you are, or about Ellen's make, and say thirty-six and a half, lively, and complete gentlewoman; and the *ne plus ultra* of a rector's lady—'a parson's wife.'"

"Well, you seem to have taken her measure very accurately, did you take her likeness?"

"Oh! yes," bowing, "it is impressed on my heart, and I think the tally is a very agreeable acquaintance, and one that Ellen will not forget at the forthcoming party. When the Lady Charlotte Moreton Noble, may possibly inform me whether my estimate has been correct."

Ellen returned rather low in spirits. Taking me aside, she said, "Of course you have acted with your usual policy.—Keep this secret.—I know Mrs. Gore, but she merely knows me as the pet of your grandfather. It is possible, that by your mother's aid, still alive, I may derive some information, which may decide the happiness or misery of many. I must go alone to see her. You will accompany me to York. and inquire no further."

My uncle entered, received me kindly; but, added he, "Is this your study of Spanish and German; you must work double tides, night and day, to make up for it."

"But my dear sir—only Saturday and Monday last.—To-morrow I shall be as fresh as a tiger. I have my lungs filled with fresh air, and my mind is relieved of parish matter."

The next morning found us all under an experienced professor, who was fond of expressing his opinion on every kind of subject, and with one of these opinions I will conclude the present chapter:—

"Gentlemen," said he, "Every member of your House of Commons should understand and enunciate Spanish boldly; he would then open his mouth—let out his words—and, as your Latin masters tell you, deliver himself '*Ore Rotundo.*'"

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM MISS FANNY HOWARD TO HER DEAR FRIEND, MISS ALICE MOWBRAY.

* * * *

"ONE of the practical results of this delightful Horatio Howard Brenton mystery, is, that we are to leave Ashdown Vale. All my life is to be stirred into agony, just when I had begun to be used to its numb pain. We are to leave that circle of acquaintances which I had learnt to know so well, that I run no risk of coming into contact with any of the passions or prejudices within it, and we are to form another in some other part of the country, to which my contribution will be bitter

hatred and reckless despair. All that is vulgar or pitiful here, is sanctified by old memories and sacred feelings; all that shall be mean and vulgar there, will be so many texts, on which my cold, hopeless life will preach one long sermon against all that is good or hopeful.

"But if you understand at all what I mean, this is what you would call heroics, and sneer at! Well, well! Alice, you are happy, and I am wretched, so I must be humble, and take care not to teaze you, or you will withdraw your friendship from me, and refuse to read my letters.

"The curate has at length openly declared himself my lover, and takes care to present himself to the whole neighbourhood in that character so obtrusively, that Mr. Horatio and Miss Ellen have considered it quite sufficient justificationfor their open interference. I have only replied to the latter by silence, and to the former by banter and evasion. . . . . I could crush this woman if I chose, Alice, but in respect to her, in spite of every provocation, I

am merciful as I am strong. I forbear to shriek in her ears, as I fairly might, how she usurped the place Horatio's mother should have held in his heart when he was a boy; how she taught him religion, with all a woman's fervour, that she might instil at the same time, a reverence and admiration for herself; how, (I blush for her, Alice) she has taken every opportunity, and made a thousand opportunities, of bringing before his notice, every alleged inconvenience resulting from the marriage of cousins. I could tell her how, years and years ago, she loved that Captain Lofty, as much as she can love anything besides her own selfish purposes, and how she has wasted her own youth and his manhood, that she might unscrupulously pursue her own object, of chaining herself to this wretched Horatio.—But I refrain, and pity and pray for her, as I pity and pray for myself.

"I am afraid that you are right in believing that my whole spirit is jaundiced. Nothing pleases me. I detect imposture and absurdity

in everything. I am irritated at the affectionate dismay with which the neighbours appear to regard our departure. I know how much the strength of this manifestation of feeling consists merely in the excitement caused by any change. The tears with which they take leave of us are but so many busy servants, preparing their faces for the smiles with which they greet our successors.

"I have told you how thoroughly that remarkable old lady, Horatio's mother, has hitherto ignored my existence; and now I have to inform you of a wondrous change which has taken place in her demeanour towards me. With that penetration which half-witted persons so often possess, she has found out my secret, and makes it the ground for an overwhelming display of pity and contempt. This conduct both amuses and attracts me, and Horatio frequently thanks me in his solemn, self-contained manner, for the attention I show his mother; but always takes care, at the same time, to say something which must

prevent me from entertaining any ambitious hopes of thereby winning his hand!

"As for the mysterious uncle whom you ask about, I can only say that I believe they are persecuting him as relentlessly as ever, and are determined to drive him out of the country. There appears to be some sort of connection between him and Ellen Percy, but what it is I cannot make out. Whatever it be, I suspect that it is the clue to the whole mystery.

"Your loving friend,

"FANNY HOWARD."

MISS FANNY HOWARD'S LAST LETTER TO MISS ALICE MOWBRAY.

* * * *

"I do not love you better, Alice, because you have been right all this time and I have been wrong; and I do not know that I should have written to you again had I not felt bound by a sense of justice, to confess that I have formed a less accurate judgment than you have

respecting certain subjects, on which we have lately corresponded.

By means of a quarrel which has taken place between the curate and Horatio, I have been enabled to learn, that the latter and Miss Ellen Percy were by no means so anxious for my union with the former as I had been led to suppose. They had been deceived equally with myself, by the manœuvres of this wily gentleman, and very penitently confess to me that they believed Mr. Fitzjames's declarations that Miss Fanny Howard was dying of love for him! I own that they have always been my friends, and that I have been very ungrateful. But what then! I am too tired and worn out now, to care who loves me or who does not; and my life must be all one grey dulness to the end.

"We are now in our new home, and I like it indifferently well. It suits me that the landscape is dull and quiet, being neither sufficiently broken to present any picturesque features, nor sufficiently flat to possess that

wondrous loamy richness, which, in the better parts of a fen country in summer time, is a perfect picture of the golden age.

"You were also right, I have to own, in your prophecy respecting Captan Lofty, and after treating me as a baby, or a doll, or a statue, or anything else that may be treated with perfect indifference, all my life, he has begun to try to convince me that I am the only object of amusement just now ready to his hands. I am sure even you must think it a sufficient sign of my present state of humility should I accept Ellen Percy's rejected lover.

"He professes to be very impatient, and as I don't care much either way, I think the next time you hear from me, it will not be as

FANNY HOWARD."

CHAPTER IX.

About this time letters from Fitzjames arrived. He was very ill—his vessel was ordered to England, and, as many *Dianas* were there, he hoped I should be able to look after them. He was ordered to Plymouth. He made no remark respecting our quarrel with his brother, and I was content to leave the matter on this footing.

He did not expect to be paid off. His vessel was one completely, as he thought, to my fancy, and if it suited my views, perhaps I might take her complete, and get him employed to run out his time on the home station.

Calling on Captain Lofty, he asked permission to use the contents of the letter, to which I assented—"possibly," he thought, "it might suit the views of the Admiralty, and as he must ere this, know the eligibility of his first-lieutenant, and how far he would suit you. For Howard, you know full well that the positive harmony of a ship of war depends solely on the first-lieutenant, not the captain. One statute in our instructions is deficient — that which should make him responsible for the comfort. I would remove him for every complaint which unnecessarily compelled the interference of the captain. A captain without judgment, and a complaining first-lieutenant, breed mutiny. The captain never should feel the thorns of command. He cannot pride himself on the appearance of his ship, if she is a prison ship within.

"On the other hand, Lord St. Vincent, Collingwood, and others, could read the character of the ship before the captain came up the side; and not unfrequently, as I am credibly informed, had completed and issued their

orders—so that they held no communion until they were fit for their purposes."

* * * *

One of the most interesting circumstances of this portion of my life consisted in the foundation of a new village near Burnham Hall, for the reception of those parishioners of Ashdown Vale Rectory, who could not bear to be separated from their old rector, and had followed him to Norfolk.

Many applicants came for the new houses and farms; but the old parishioners were given the refusal, and, where advances were required, aided.

* * * *

June had arrived, and yet no appointment. Excitement here had ceased, and the salt water would now be agreeable.

One morning before the 21st, a foolscap arrived, and I was summoned to London, for orders to join H.M. sloop, *Avenger*.

The distress, &c., I must leave behind. I reached the Admiralty—saw my friends—was complimented by the first lord, but informed

that my duty, for the present, would confine me to the Channel, until a particular object, which the Government had in contemplation, sent me to Mexico, and that a knowledge of the Spanish language might be important.

The senior naval lord informed me that I would supersede Captain Fitzjames, but that he would be otherwise provided for. I had now a very trusty servant, a brother of Captain Noble's servant; also a good steward, as well as cook.

I reached Plymouth in three days, taking it very quietly, and delaying, perhaps, to afford Fitzjames more time.

The admiral received me kindly—the general's family, very affectionately—and my good friend, Sir Herbert, with his fatherly friendship.

Poor Fitzjames was a wreck. I now found that he had Haskins and some of the middies with him. Haskins, poor fellow! thought he should die in England; but, if we were going back to the West Indies, he wished to remain.

A few words with him might be important.

"Now, Haskins, what sort of a first-lieutenant? Must I find another?"

"Better not, if you can keep him; your own man cut and dried."

"Come and dine with me at Goude's."

"With pleasure, sir."

"Now, Fitzjames, am I to keep this first-lieutenant of yours?"

"I am afraid not, sir. He would be invaluable to you. I think he has some idea of leaving; but that, I think, will materially rest with you."

"Well, you will all dine with me to-day. I have no authority yet—I am merely a H.P.—P. G.—Will you be kind enough to introduce me to your officers?"

"Tell the officers I wish to see them in order."

"Mr. Bradshaw, sir, the senior lieutenant."

"Well, Mr. Bradshaw"—taking his hand—"I am delighted to find this vessel in such fine order. Old *Diana's* here too. I hope

we shall have as happy a ship, and I as easy a time as Captain Noble. Will you dine with me to-day?"

He bowed—"I hope, sir, your expectations will be realized; but, as far as I may be an humble instrument under you, it will depend, I believe, on letters which I expect from the Admiralty."

"Oh! I think I have one, from one of the lords, for you. Yes—here it is—'Lieutenant Bradshaw'—how stupid you must think me!"

He retired, saying—"With your permission, sir, I will see you after I have read this."

Haskins bowed and passed.

The master—Mr. Hake.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Hake"—taking his hand.—"They tell me I have a good pilot, and may sleep soundly when you come upon soundings. I shall be happy to see you at dinner."

He bowed and retired.

Mr. Colville, the surgeon.

"Happy to make your acquaintance. No

ceremony, doctor; my cabin will heve a good library, and no martial screen between us. I expect you all to dinner."

He bowed.

Mr. Gaze, the purser.

"Very glad to see you, Mr. Gaze"—shaking hands.—"Hope all will work well—expect you at dinner. Now, what sort of a clerk, Fitzjames?"

"Good fellow, sir—very steady—quite your man—and very trustworthy."

Mr. Evans.

"Talk to you, Mr. Evans this evening—expect you to dinner."

Mate, middies, and warrants followed—but I would see them to-morrow. Officers may have much to say—not a jovial party—one of business.

Lieut. Bradshaw now returned.

"Can I see you alone for a few moments, sir?" (Captain Fitzjames retired.) "Sir, I expected my promotion; that, sir, has not arrived. My friend, Sir H. H., also, I believe, intimate with you, advises my remaining here.

If you consider, sir, that my services will meet with your approbation, I need not say how happy I shall be to serve under Captain Howard. Am I to say Brenton, or to drop that addition?"

"Drop it, Bradshaw. A preamble to a bill, my good fellow, is so much dust in your eyes. Any man that does his duty, should feel a confidence in himself that requires, like good wine, no bush. If a man has defects, they will show. Now, I believe, you have none—unless you are about to confess any that are secret: those are better kept. Confidence is the only thing we require; and, under your supervision, I look for the comfort of every soul outside these cabin doors."

I offered my hand, and as he took it, I felt that he had some heart.

The dinner party brought me into close contact and confidence with all. Happiness seemed to illuminate all but Fitzjames; but his wound and illness accounted satisfactorily to me, at least, for his lowness of spirits. The

next day I took command and mustered the crew, among whom I found many good men. My former hammockman, captain of foretop, now became my coxswain; the late coxswain, gunner's mate. Some old *Superb's* got leave to exchange where I had ratings vacant; and before I left harbour, I think we were nearly all *Diana's*, in crew.

The admiral claimed me to dinner, and a very splendid one it was; his son was present, and some foolish young men were cramming him with the never-to-be-forgotten pig story. He doubted, and they told him to ask his father. At that time he did not, although stated to the contrary. Some of those young men may recollect their tricks, and be ashamed of provoking the good old man, for he was a kind protector of their interests.

We visited Portsmouth, Torbay, and knocked about the Channel for a short time, coming in the Sound on the 25th of August, to complete for six weeks. I was much on board the *Superb*, very intimate with her captain,

and, indeed, at home in every ship in harbour. I found that the juniors (commanders not included, I supposed) were to dine together on the anniversary of Algiers, at the New Royal Hotel, Plymouth. Averse as I was to such affairs, our old captain was to preside; and, as I was one of his adherents, I determined to be of the party. Why the great guns of that action were not present was never explained. But, if I am allowed to have an opinion, it arose from the originator, not a captain nor lieutenant, being rather objectionable.

The enthusiasm which prevailed was, indeed, most gratifying; many excellent toasts were given, and speeches made. But, like that action especially, too much powder and shot were expended to no purpose; and, heated to frenzy, nothing would serve these mad lieutenants and middies but chairing the gallant president, and, in the struggle, harlequinizing him, if I recollect, through a glazed door. I stuck by him to afford him escape, by impeding their mad career—picked up a

done-up shipmate, who, in falling on his face on the stone steps, looked like one of the wounded of that day twelvemonth, and I saw him deposited in safe hands—white kersey-mere pantaloons and waistcoat unmistakeably painted.

Now, I asked myself—how could any admiral, or captain, of character, suffer such a disgraceful exhibition? Where they right or wrong in never repeating or countenancing it?

We had, nevertheless, some right good and honourable men then at Plymouth, two of which (one a Champagné) became peers.

Not long after this our poor admiral died, and was buried, with full military honours following the hearse, beyond the turnpike at Plymouth. Lord Exmouth succeeded to the command; but I had quittted for Portsmouth before he joined at Torbay. I found the *Tiber*, a wild laughing Halifax captain, and connected with our hero of *Granicus*. Halifax yarns had no interest for him. At Portsmouth I received

notice to repair to town—saw my friends for a farewell—back to my craft, and sailed with special orders for Jamaica and Vera Cruz.

Passages are tedious — Madeira afforded forty-eight hours enjoyment. Two vessels laden with very amiable mothers and daughters, all, of course, *engaged*, no hearts to *spare* —bound for India—no speculation in those times, pretty certain information before they were shipped for exportation. But a vow had been registered in St. Bride's, as I somehow learned, to better themselves if any opportunity offered before reaching Calcutta.

That good, warm-hearted creature, Gordon, gave up his house for the ball, and the *Avengers* made sad havoc among the hearts, so that to prevent desertion, I was compelled to put to sea, nearly leaving one sadly wounded swain behind.

Teneriffe afforded time to recover their heads and senses, and the worst cases recovered by low temperature on the Peak where some donkeys carried them.

Crossing the tropic was played, as the equator was out of our way, and the greater part of our crew having suffered before. I was with some half-dozen more, Neptune not being in any hurry or having much business, treated handsomely.

And now we entered the West Indies—dropped letters at Barbadoes—dined with the good old man C——h, and on for Jamaica—picked up the White horses off Port Morant, and soon made out the flag of my old captain in the *Salisbury*, at Port Royal. I was no sooner anchored than his flag point was down to meet me (an old Halifax *Melampus*), and I was received with every kindness and hospitality by the warm-hearted admiral. My quarters in barracks were here allotted, and I found myself at home. Here I met an old channel friend, his flag captain, who had not long pushed out one who was no friend of mine. Let him rest.—I can make no good use of him. My delay was short, I was to proceed on to Vera Cruz, with letters to every one worth knowing.

Here I cannot omit a form I had with other captains to endure,—that of signing an agreement to divide freight, as if the word of an officer was not his bond. Sorry am I to say that it was requisite here, and I was informed that a freight was embarked when the officer declined, and another had the pleasure of performing this agreeable duty, of a protracted cruize, and the eventual loss of his vessel. This may be station scandal, but I witnessed enough of this freight machinery to disgust me with the practice. True, I was rich beyond the desire of more, but the disgusting avidity for money—the jealousy at my taking the bread out of their mouths, as it was called, must still touch some who have ere this learned to think with me, that it disgraced our profession. Were no murders committed? (in the eye of Heaven), in several smuggling cases? Reflect ye, who hold the price of blood spilled!

Curiously enough, three of the squadron, and within a few days of each other, were

wrecked in these seas; one at Tampico, one Alacranes, and the other Colarados.

He of Alacranes, Roberts, was my gallant friend, I did not meet him, but fame always heralded his active deeds with the spars and rigging of his vessel; he is said to have constructed a double wattled wall, filled in between with sand, and thus forming a Martello tower, mounted his guns within; repulsing a Spanish frigate, which felt a deep interest in his freight, which he preserved and landed in Havanna.

True or not, let others decide. It is an ingenious expedient, and he denied it not. My informant was an active man, whose vessel, I believe, relieved him and men.

But my orders are for Vera Cruz, and not to touch those sholas, nor delay by 'yarning' on the road.

Mrs. Gore had given me letters of introduction, which were of genuine service. Mr. Thom and partner received me handsomely, and the admiral's letters were of some import-

ance. The public despatches were forwarded to Mexico by special courier. I could not accompany him at the rate he would travel or return, and I knew too well the necessity of despatch. Money in the mean time was crammed into my vessel *nolens volens*, presents innumerable from Mr. Thom, return despatches, with secret notes; reached Jamaica; ordered to Carthagena, and returned. Then prepare for England *via* Havanna. The freight money was served out as prize-money.

A week was passed delightfully at Penn. As we stood out, *The Pique*—that pretty little jewel—was coming in. We had some idea of cutting his capers, but some well-known flag or gun from the flag-ship salutes his senses, and 'charged with despatches, ordered to proceed without delay' at our main, prevented a very painful recognition.

We entered Havanna at midnight, and before the land-breeze had made out; but were compelled to anchor. The customary hail from the fort ensued, but a good noisy

dog would have replied, for not one word could we make out.

Bradshaw answered in very plain English, for the best of reasons—"He knew little of Spanish, and if he made a mistake, it might cause mischief. If they mistake good English, it is not my fault."

"Sir, I have had a very sound maxim impressed on me—'never enter into diplomacy in any other language but your own.' If you know their language better than the parties opposed, you can cut them up at pleasure. But, sir, as for the writing, let it be English, and so plain that they cannot twist it to suit their purpose."

"Thank you, Bradshaw; that is just now rather an important matter; I have dealings with these Spaniards, and I might even—as I saw at Vera Cruz and Carthagena—have been misled by my interpreters, who did not render me the true version, and yet they were officials and my own countrymen.

"Well, Bradshaw, we have been little toge-

ther—I have been all business, at my flying visits, and no time to look round me. I hope you have all enjoyed yourselves?"

"Oh! sir, amazingly; but we tried hard with the flag-lieutenant to get you to witness a grand dignity ball, especially given to the *Avengers;* but there was some under-current. It was thought, that as some captains were omitted, that it might give offence, and so it never reached you."

"Really, Bradshaw, I would have asked the admiral to excuse me, and I do really think he would have accompanied me, if permitted."

* * * *

In the house of my friend, Don N., were his wife, a gawky son—rather rakish—and three daughters, all very interesting and as sisterly as one could wish. As I took my meals with them in preference, and conformed entirely to their customs, I soon was taught to speak; at all events, one at each side—one at my feet—father and mother laughing,

and setting them on, my tongue had no rest. To describe this exciting schooling is beyond my powers. It was a torture—the torture of being trampled to death by butterflies. And yet some of our English captains have thought fit to deride this gaiety of heart—this innocence—and term it want of decorum. But let the brave revealer of family secrets try his fortune at any breach of propriety—too soon would he find his mistake, and be punished for his temerity by a stiletto between his ribs.

Our time was short; I had much official business, requiring deep attention, to complete; and I was again fortunate in effecting my object, without the slightest suspicion on the part of those deeply interested in foiling me.

I gave a ball during my stay here, and it was deemed one of the best done things in Havanna; and, had we remained, I believe the rage that it created would have ruined many unable to support even a moderate tertulio—such is their character. If enjoyment is to be

found in the waltz, who so well know how to render that exercise intoxicating, as those who were now leading us in the maze, even to the seventh heaven of Mahomet. "Not a dancer, eh!" I think I hear Noble exclaim. This is not dancing — not bobbing up and down, like a parched pea or the keys of a piano—degrading motion, if viewed by day in the opposite house. This is rational exercise and amusement. This is pleasant—t'other aint, as Brother Jonathan would say.

The governor and suite enjoyed it amazingly; and, I believe, another such entertainment would have taken the island—that was not our business. At a late hour we went to rest, to dream over an enjoyment never before or since surpassed. Our fair friends did not show until the evening, and that was to be our parting, for the morning land-breeze would waft us out. We were laden with dulces and cigars, and some little freight—just enough to give our men a comfortable cruize at Portsmouth.

CHAPTER X.

Our leave taking was painful, being from three new sisters, and two much esteemed friends. But our profession tastes these miseries too often. It results from the confidence and warmth with which we are ever received as welcome guests. We are spoiled—we are too apt to discover our weakness, and return more affection than is justifiable, more than is honestly at our banker's. Many a poor mistaken heart has bitterly repented being too sisterly. But what shall we say to those who not only abuse all these advantages, but leave behind indignant feelings which have since closed the doors to many of our profession?—yes, de-

stroyed hospitality! Attribute it not to altered means—to pernicious sentiments—that times have changed. No! rather say that parents feel that their families are not to be outraged or defamed by the passing stranger of a profession, once deemed the shield of woman's weakness.

Even here, in a foreign land, this house would not open its doors to a pendant of our country without an introduction. They have had their warning!

We remained until midnight—started with the land-wind, and at breakfast time the blue and grey tints of the land were all that remained to remind us of a concentration of enjoyment. At noon all was reddish brown—disagreeable; and before night our excitement had brought that weariness which ensures to healthy minds that inestimable blessing of Nature, sound and refreshing sleep—more potent in all its phases than medicine.

About two a.m. we were suddenly startled from our enjoyment by sound not at all plea-

sant, and by a crash on deck, which made me fancy we had neared Algiers.

"A large brig and a schooner, sir—one on each bow; they have fired into us." This was Haskins.

"Take it quietly, my boy. Turn the men up to quarters. No drum—no pipes. I will be with you presently. No lights, remember, but in buckets."

"Ay, ay, sir!" shouted Bradshaw, who was todling up.

"Be quiet, Bradshaw, or you may get some of our people hurt."

We were now all clear, ready, both sides; and they hailed, in Spanish—

"Heave to; lower all sails, or you will be sunk."

Presently I replied in very pure Castilian, "Now give it them." They were both end on.—Down tumbled spars, sails—all was confusion. "Another dose, mind, at the guns—their masts at the gunwale—foreward guns mainmast—after guns foremast.—Crack went

the next round. An English voice now hailed, "What the devil are you about? we have both struck."

"Come on board, then, immediately, or you will get another round."

Lights were shown in each, and their boats came on board. They were two South American cruisers, probably pirates. But as no good could arise from their detention, and the Spanish authorities would probably pick them up, we detained their commanders until daylight—examined their commissions—Venezuelan, I think—found they were both much crippled in spars, even if they stood until fished, and advising them to take more care of their shot than to treat Englishmen with them, left them to their fate somewhat crest-fallen, and wondering such an atom could be called an *Avenger*, or could do them such damage with two rounds. "Verily, these English are devils!" and they decamped.

Their shot had struck the bows, grazed the foremast, and cut one fore-shroud; another

struck just abaft the main channels, smashed the binnacle, "and very near frighten," as our Dutch friend would say, the man at the wheel; the others went through the canvas. No person hurt. I hope no damage to their men ensued (provided they were honestly engaged), but I suspect some lives were lost, from certain expressions which escaped.

Our passage home was good, about five weeks. I went up from Portsmouth with the despatches, remained the next day in town to explain—all very satisfactory—and ordered to Lisbon, Gibraltar, Genoa, Leghorn, Naples—there I would receive further instructions from our minister, or the admiral, if present.

I had now another language to learn; luckily, my friend, Salamé, met me. After inquiring of him, he replied, "I have just the man for you; take him as your valet, ciceroni, cook, anything, for distress brings a man down very low."

"That will not do, my good friend, no

prince cooks for me; tell me his present rank in his own country, if free."

"Well, a gentleman, but for years he has been valet, and in that capacity he will be glad to join you. His dialect is pure, and he understands teaching."

"Terms?"

"Well, I know you will think less of him, if I name low wages—£50."

"Good! more if I am satisfied. You must not spoil the market, my friend. Well, what now?"

"£20, and he shall provide all the necessary books."

"Come with me to Sir Charles Harrison's, and I will sign you a cheque. Oh, he is out of town; come to the Foreign Office, we may perhaps find him there, if in town.

So taking his arm, we walked up Downing Street. There I met Sir Charles, who had reckoned on hearing of me. He took me aside, and said, "Stick closely to these people; when once they take a man up, his character is made.

Leave your affairs to your friends, and recollect now you are shipped, 'Mum is the secret.' No one in town! I will tell them all about you. Good luck to you," and off he flew.

I now went to the Admiralty, got a seal paper, and wrote a pile of letters, which were sealed and forwarded, and I was on my way to Guildford, where I slept—on to Portsmouth, reaching the Admiral's in time for dinner.

"You are a pretty flyaway! Well—no questions; so pick up one of the ladies, and come along."

Several old acquaintance were present, and new ones introduced, both military and civil, and many a leading question was put as to my destination.

Our equipment was complete, and my sailing orders would be down by to-morrow's post. 'Time being precious,' as my good uncle has it, I sought the doctor, still in the new flagship, and from him learned all that was new. The gang was destroyed; Government wished

to do something for him—but how, he could not imagine. "Make me as useful as they can, and that repays me: my appointment takes care of me."

"And who takes care of Champion Villa?"

"Oh! some friend of Ellen's has it until the spring, when she has some idea of coming down here."

"To whom does it belong?"

"To her, I believe. I know nothing about its title. I will not ask you where you are going, because I know all that is requisite—and walls have ears. Letters will be down for you by to-morrow's post, introducing you to useful friends. If Tunis, Tripoli, Algiers, or Tangier should bring you up, make use of my name as the 'Hadji Doctor;' they will name me at once, and be your friends; and when they are *friends*, let no one doubt them, unless he wishes the most deadly foe."

"Well, doctor, I should come and breakfast with you, but I have so much to do, that I must be close to the admiral; therefore, I

hope you will be with me at the 'George' at nine."

So we parted. On reaching the 'George,' Bradshaw was there, waiting for me, and one or two others; and, as my appetite had returned—one cannot eat at set dinners—we enjoyed a game supper.

"Well, sir, I have got all the officers and youngsters here, that are on shore, to know your wishes. We have orders to be ready for sea at post to-morrow."

"Good! — At post-time to-morrow — any officers who may be on shore—yourself, if you have business—will await my pleasure at breakfast. Then, and not until then, I shall know if I have a will or pleasure. But you give orders—for doubtless you have a boat here—that one of the cutters, or say two, shall be at the stairs, Beef-house, at nine."

"Well, I will save time by sending her off. May I write here?"

"Yes, one of the youngsters can run down with the note."

"No, sir, I like to explain matters to the officer of the boat. Pen and ink will not travel like the tongue, and sometimes blots."

"All right, Bradshaw. Another grouse hot for you when you come back."

The doctor, master-purser, and two middies were our party. They did not sit easy in their chairs, and evidently were sleepy, so I desired all but the doctor to go to bed.

I continued discussing matters with him, and told him in confidence, as we were bound for the Mediterranean, to purchase on my account any extra medicines. "All the officers, letters will be sent to the admiral's office here, and sent in an official bag to me. Have you seen anything like an Italian, a valet of mine?"

"No, sir."

"Well, I hired one in town, and he ought to have been here. I have never seen him, and therefore cannot describe him; but if a stray monkey-looking fellow should be seen wandering, put him in the right way. When Bradshaw returns you can start if you wish;

but I have nothing more to say—oh! yes,—How is Haskins' health?"

"Well, he is weak—too weak to do first-lieutenant's duty, but his only chance for life is constant excitement; one week on shore, with despondency, would kill him. If you died he would consider it his duty to die also. He is quite a machine—a clock; if the pendulum stops, he dies."

"But he has always been so, doctor, even worse. I never hear him cough now—at least as he was accustomed to do—it was agony to witness."

Bradshaw glided in, and the doctor, smiling, glided out.

"All right, sir, but where have those youngsters gone too?"

"Oh! I sent them to bed."

"Well, they obeyed the last order, no doubt; but where to find their nests to-morrow morning would puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer. Do you expect them here at nine o'clock to-morrow, sir?"

"Well, that is a question I was not prepared for. If they are very sleepy, perhaps not; but it is my fault, poor fellows, they looked very sleepy."

He smiled, and said, "Well, sir, the craft is all ready, have you any good tidings for me, sir?"

"None, except a pretty cruize—look round the paper for eyes or ears."

"Oh, none, sir."

"Well, we go to Lisbon, Gibraltar, Genoa, Leghorn, Naples—further I know not."

Pretty good ground, too, sir. I would not mind serving as a lieutenant if they dated me back—but this hope deferred I am afraid will make me ill-natured. Many a good soul has been ruined by hope deferred—no allusion to friends."

"Come go to bed, too, Bradshaw. You are to be here at breakfast at nine."

"I suppose, sir, I am to find the youngsters?"

"Well, yes, — but you may get a cold breakfast."

"Anything, sir, but a cold word. I live only in sunshine," Off he went. I said to myself—"Very true, Bradshaw. You have a heart, and a very expansive one for that body, but there is a great width of chest, and you have the organ of benignity very strongly developed."

The doctor was the early man, the others followed and were introduced; and, just as we had given them up, Bradshaw and his ducklings hove in sight, one in each hand, as if he were afraid to lose them. Then, as we espied him from the bow-window, every one had a laugh, each, perhaps, in his own humour, for nothing was uttered. But no fear but he would find them.

"All right, sir," as he came in smiling. "Not piped yet, sir, I hope?"

"No; but the bell has struck, 'make it so,'" and we sat down.

"You found your birds then?"

"Oh! yes, sir, I had a look out below, and the moment I left the hotel I tracked them."

The letters from the admiral's office, now arrived, and one for Bradshaw. I found that policy kept my Italian in London, he would be delivered by the morning-coach about ten and was to be shipped forthwith, when I would sail, the mails were in an admiral's bag, directed simply to my care.

"Now Bradshaw appears off, you remain with one cutter for packages, and tell Haskins to heave short and sheet home, as he sees you leave the sally-post. Return here for me."

The admiral was ready to receive me.

"Here are your orders, simply Lisbon, you know the rest. Happy to see you back, but bring a frigate, sir. Mind you obey the last order."

"Thank you, sir," and shaking me warmly by the hand, we parted.

Just then the coach drove up, and a queer-looking person, with numerous packages, bowing, presented me with a note, intimating

that the packages were for various diplomatic persons, requesting that I would take care of them and call them mine, until I understood the enclosed list of the same.

The good doctor took my last letters, accompanied me to the boat, pressed my hand, and vanished to watch our motions from the saluting-battery—that last refuge for the last parting signal. Handkerchiefs over bonnets, signals never disregarded, even by blind eyes, were answered; but there were none for me. As we reached the ship, the anchor was nearly atrip, and a nod the only order to an inquisitive eye, and it was at the bows, bars out and stowed boats up, and sail made before the evolutions could be explained.

CHAPTER XI.

"Now, Mr. Carlos—I believe I am to call you—this is Mr. Bradshaw. You must make friends with him, and he will give you a sleeping place; and in forty-eight hours, or when you feel strong in the stomach, come to me for instructions."

He bowed, and withdrew.

We slipped past Cowes, through the Needles, and had nearly got out of the chops of the Channel, when we took a north-wester, which spoiled many stomachs; but we stuck to it, carried every stitch that we could, relieving her of all top hamper—top-gallant masts on

deck, booms off the yards—and barely cleared Cape Finisterre, with good sea room, when we suddenly perceived the calm ahead. This I fully expected, and told Bradshaw to be prepared for all canvass before sunset; at which he fancied I was joking, and looked rather cautiously at me. But I said—

"My good sir, I know this fickle place well —fury and froth, followed by listlessness. If you are not quick in fidding top-gallant masts, and getting canvass on her as the breeze slackens, you may wallow like a cask. I have been in company with another cruizer here, who was junior to our captain. He was one of your very wise men, who think their young heads superior to old; but our captain did not force him to follow motions. We were under royals, but not making more than two knots, yet steady, and running into smooth water. He was seen four hours after it had lulled, rolling gunwale to sprung both top-gallant masts—lost two men overboard, and was severely reprimanded by the admirals for not

officially reporting the facts. Our report of vessels seen, and the supposed loss of top-gallant masts, induced Sir P. D. to call for his log, and by this he was detected. He was much disgusted at being found out, and did not appear among us again.

"Come, no time to lose—be moving!"

And Bradshaw had enough to do before we were easy. Rain succeeded; a light westerly breeze carried us southerly, and, before midnight, she was easy as a glove, steering for the Rock of Lisbon.

The description of well-known ports forms no part of my narrative, nor will I detain the reader by any amusement here which was personal. My despatches delivered, and time allowed until eight a.m. to forward others for Gibraltar, was all the delay which I could afford; and, at that instant, the ship was gliding past the town and forts—and again, with an off-shore wind, gliding swiftly along It is only in these small craft—or frigates, at the extreme—that persons do enjoy the sea

air, mixed with that sea-weed odour which floats on its surface, and imparts such health to the frequenters of bathing places; but sea-weed spots, more particularly. An excursion for shells, sea-weeds, &c.—let them wet their feet, and, no mistake, that is infinitely more beneficial than a dreaded plunge.

"Now, Bradshaw, I want to consult with you—come below." (We were seated). "This Italian is to be my nominal valet, but yet our master—let him have all the comfort you can outside, and give him *status* according to his employment. Now let us have all the available officers here." I rang the bell, and the steward having summoned them, I addressed them—"Gentlemen, our reception at foreign ports depends as much on manners and education as the uniform we have the honour to wear. I have reason to know that many absurd errors and misunderstandings occurred in 1814—15 in Italy, owing to the misinterpretation, or ignorance, of the two languages—that of pure Italian and that corruption

used by the Lazzaroni. Now we, fortunately, have a passenger—borne as my valet—who is competent to instruct us in both; he speaks French also, fluently. Daily, between nine and eleven, I propose to hold an examination, or lecture here. Carlos will give exercises, and will lecture on them during those hours. Your own good sense will point out to you how valuable this advantage is: it is a passport to good society—you experienced the benefit of speaking Spanish at Havanna. You may have frequent opportunities at Naples, whither we are bound. Now let us have Carlos." (He appeared). "Now, I hope you are strong, and have recovered your sea legs."

"Oh! sir, I never lost them. I have been much at sea, and I think I met you once, in 1815, at Naples. I was then in the *Alcmene*."

"Possibly—I was there at that period, at the capture.

"Now, I propose that you take each gentleman separately; give him his books—for you have a complete supply—instruct him

how to make the best use of his time when alone, and give him a very short exercise to write out daily. So manage these exercises that one word in each will afford you a subject to lecture on critically, dissecting the pure reading and pronunciation of his exercise. To-morrow, gentlemen, at nine, lectures commence." They retired.

One frequently notices in advertisements, some language taught in six lessons—possibly, this may be the secret. At all events, at the termination of ten days, we were very proficient, and one or two were quite *au fait* at the Lazzaroni dialect, which affected boats' information, &c. Every one liked Carlos: he was a gentleman; and, but for the absurdity of his being a valet, and that he would have to return to that vocation if he left me at Naples, he would have been better placed at the gun-room table, as Italian master and private secretary—which positions he perfectly occupied, having a cabin to himself.

At Gibraltar we had stores, charts, and

other affairs to complete; passed a few pleasant days, and sailed for Genoa. Here we were safe within the Mole, and were detained a week—not uselessly spent, but the formality here did not yield. There was no Spanish generosity of sentiment; and the theatres and our own dinners, and society, principally constituted our enjoyment here. We were glad to get away, and hoped for better things at Leghorn. Whether a Leghorn bonnet had an unknown charm, I know not, but the name alone was exciting—it must cover some interesting face, at all events, to people determined to be pleased; the road is very smooth, and so we found it at Leghorn; a select, agreeable society, excursions to the country to fill our note and sketch-books, killed time wonderfully fast, and we were as sorry, by ten times and more, to quit Leghorn and its bonnets, as it had gladdened us to escape from the cold, gloomy grandeur of the palaces of Genoa. The thought even of one of those polished, cold marble floors, and as cold hearts, makes

me shudder. But now for Naples—passing Elba, taking a peep at the principal headlands, and never out of sight of land, we make Vesuvius, Ischia, &c., and anchor in the Bay of Naples. But how different!—now in command, and no senior present!

By the minister I was most warmly received, and introduced at court. A palace was allotted to us, and here we were at-home, "one family!" Poor Carlos had to be retained; he was not safe beyond British protection, why, we could not learn, and yet, at the palace, every attention was paid becoming my *secretaire*. Flights to Vesuvius, attending fair countrywomen, who had now penetrated thus far, and constituted a large English society, and who were too glad to have sailors to pull them up the loose cinders, as they held on by a stick, in which we nauticals first taught them to becket with handkerchiefs. Many were the little mishaps we did not see, possibly owing to the smoke from the crater, and which was no business of ours,

and delighted all were to get one fresh inspiration of unsulphuretted vapour, as we attained each prominent rise, until we stood on the brink.

But this has all been much better told, and more made of it, than my fancy is inclined to recognize; we thought more of those entrusted to our protection; and possibly, the excitement of the heart, in ascending so much nearer heaven than they had ever reached, produced very warm feelings on their part, warmer even than those partaking of gratitude. Admiration, the view demanded. Well, we descended, washed the dust down with *tovre del Goaco*, softened the palate with *Lagrym Christi*, and delivered our charges safe into the hands of their respective mammas. The papas, be it known, had been taken care of by the *ciceroni*, and were almost lost sight of by the clipper squadron, and besides, they were not so specially entrusted to our safe keeping. Will any of those fair ones detect us? Perhaps—but I am safe—what mystery in the change of a name!

An entertainment at the palace cannot be recounted, it would require a little history, and safety in England. The minister's party was almost an English circle of beings, delighted to get away from school. There was no pretended fondness for "Dear old England." No, that escape was too recent—the life, liberty, freedom of Italian air, *to them*, was intoxicating. An expedition of selected individuals was got up by some one at the palace. The minister and myself, including one of our youngsters, were of the party. Pompeii and Herculaneum our objects. No ladies were included. An escort attended. We examined Herculaneum, the Museum at Portici, and thence to Pompeii. No one appeared to be at work at this time; some few trifling bits of glass, a lachrymatory, and a bronze handle of a door, were delivered to the person to whom we were indebted for the liberty we possessed of ranging freely, and which, together with other interesting mementos, found their way eventually through Carlos to my room. We passed a quiet even-

ing at the palace, and enjoyed it until the opera time, where we usually adjourned.

We entertained a few friends at our palace, but it did not suit my purpose to exhibit any extraordinary expense here. Money flew fast, but it went towards England, in orders for marbles, ornaments, corals, &c., with some few wines, delicious here, but meagre, in the extreme, in England.

Is it reality, or affectation, that induces an old traveller in Italy to smack his lips, and endeavour to make you believe that his *lagrymi Christi* or *Italian* wine is delicious, when the features of some opposite friend, who never crossed the British Channel, exhibit unalterable difference of opinion?—who so barefaced as to abuse the taste of the host or hostess—*Caveto.*

CHAPTER XII.

FOURTEEN days thus pleasantly passed changed the scene. The admiral came in, and we became very small fish, and suddenly anxious to breathe sea air. This the admiral and the minister thought prudent, for the latter did not wish that I should be here during his stay. I was, therefore—on the service of the minister, I suppose—ordered to Palermo, thence to Malta, Tripoli, Tunis, Cagliari, and to be at Naples, without fail, on the termination of one month—at which date I was to obey the wishes of his excellency, the admiral having other duty calling him to Malta before that period. If I found that time permitted, I was

to call at Leghorn: this, as was intimated by the minister, I would learn at Cagliari, where the admiral would send me despatches on leaving Naples—a genteel intimation to return immediately.

There were some who missed us; and some at the palace, who had unbent, were not pleased with the greater ship and attendants. We stole away—were missed in the morning—and soon reached Palermo—another place of enjoyment, but wretched in every point as regarded society. Much as we were petted, if I may use the expression, there was a want of security—a hollowness which threw a damp over every attempt at gaiety.

I shall, therefore, pursue my course—pass Etna, Maritimo, and the off-lying islands, and seek Malta. My orders did not detain us—the senior officer had an aversion to any diplomatic weapons — and a few days sent us out of Malta. Tripoli we communicated with, short and sweet, and then we anchored in the great bay of Tunis.

The first idea which presented itself was—'What was this capacious bay intended for?' Nature replies—'For some great naval power and commanding city.'

True! Here Carthage stood. History must seek the fleet; it was not in sight. Tunis is situated within the mouth of the bay, locked, at its aperture, by the fortress-adapted island of Zembra. The Consul received us kindly, and the neighbourhood and society was more congenial to amusement than Palermo or Malta. The ruins of Carthage are to be found in the ploughed fields by search; there a moulding or pilaster of peculiar marble, or a slip of pavement may often be turned up. The tanks remain—huge double-arched cylindrical vats, capable of housing the hull of a three-decker. But beware of all old buildings, tents, or the vicinity of Arabs—surely will the piquant recollection attend you, and most troublesome, too, for weeks. It is a friendship not easily shaken off—flee where you will.

Exercise and pure air, with more temperate

living, seemed to benefit officers and crew. The attention of our kind consul was ever on the alert. Every refreshment that could be thought of was abundantly supplied—but we were cautioned against embarking animals, on account of pratique.

I was received by the bey in state; and I had not forgotten to try Doctor Howard's hadji—and it had its weight, if presents were also put into the scale; but I saw too little of Tunisian society to feel the influence of personal attention. The consul did not enter into their views, perhaps, although I believe he was much regarded—and we found our time fully engrossed by agreeable occupation.

On reaching Cagliari, an unforeseen stopper damped our expectations. We were expected —they intended to enjoy themselves, and surely we should be amused and happy,—but we had touched the polluted Barbary shore! Pratique! that horrible sound burst on our ears. Every imaginable device was tried, but failed. The consul advised visiting as many

ports as possible, "At one you may be fortunate. Get a clean bill of health there, and you may be admitted at Naples. Try Leghorn *last.*" Presents evinced the kind feelings which could find no other mode of communication. The despatch for my return I received simply—"Return to Naples when your duties are complete, and follow the wishes of His Majesty's minister, acquainting me of your departure should they lead you to England."

Along the coast they were all awake—evidently warned. But we were too quick for them. In Corsica I was *boarded*, and that set the matter at rest. Left in twenty-four hours —touched on the N.W. — communicated — reached Porto Ferrajo in Elba, and on to Leghorn. How ridiculous is quarantine! Here we made up for lost time; but no one dared mention Barbary or Tunis. We escaped, and being last from Leghorn, and boarded by the chief of the board of health—it was an utter impossibility, high treason, to imagine that he could err! This possibly saved some difficulty,

but all hands were warned never to mention the Barbary trip. The minister had outwitted himself, and was very much annoyed—indeed, did not consider our stay prudent. Another vessel would be sent to him. We must amuse ourselves at Gaeta, on the coast Civita Vecchia, Porto Ferrajo, and await despatches at Leghorn. The number of ports visited would so distance Barbary in their minds, that its effect would not, by their slow ideas of motion, be at all dreamt of.

This afforded us great amusement, and Rome, from the sea, was not far distant. But before visiting it, we must go to Civita Vecchia.

The coral fishery off this coast we accidentally stumbled on, one morning; and, possibly from the fear that we were a corsair, they willingly sold some very handsome coral trees, attached to stones, which were deemed of great value at Leghorn. One jeweller offered a necklace, estimated at eight hundred dollars, for one of them. Necklaces

I could buy, but this would be a gift, to some mad collector, of price beyond rubies; therefore, I preferred my submarine little forest.

At Civita Vecchia, it was hinted that *where* and *how* I obtained these jewels must be kept secret, or trouble would inevitably occur to the fishermen, who belonged to a powerful company. Behold me, then, a robber!—unconsciously so in my own conscience. But what could I do? Any course would be sure to entail vengeance on the fishermen. 'Trust to your guardian,' whispered in my ear by some unseen sprite, left me at peace. I visited Rome—saw Rome as it then was and is described. Well, I found out the head of this company, and became his friend. We talked of the coral fishery, and the depredations which must constantly be committed.

"Oh, my dear sir," he exclaimed, "that does not come home to us; for we offer them higher prices for the coral than by any such visits they could receive. Thus, I recollect Lord Exmouth's ships meeting them, and

taking all they had; but they gave them too much, enough to make them desist from fishing for some time. We advance money to them, but we have no power over them."

"Well," I said, "we fell in with them."

"Oh, we know the whole story. I only hope you have not been *taken in*, for they are most expert rogues."

"Well, I was prepared to come to terms."

"Oh, no! If you have been fortunate, it affords me pleasure. But, try heat; if they stand that, keep them close, or you may be robbed."

So I kept my coral—they stood fire, and I had faced it.

And now for Porto Ferrajo, Elba, the spot where Napoleon passed so few days; and ours were short—some few curiosities, minerals, &c.—which I had been requested to search for—formal visits, and once more Leghorn. Now we were safe; we had expiated all Barbary contamination; and here were we to be retained in silken bands, until a bag of those

foolscap letters sent us home. But we were safe—quite safe; that shield which divides nations, even brothers and sisters, with fearful repulsiveness, was interposed, and saved the hearts of both sides. Religion!—difference of faith! Their parents would never consent, however much the daughters might be inclined. And our feelings did not consent to marriage with a Roman Catholic, even if a recreant to her faith!

CHAPTER XIII.

JUST as we we were on the point of starting for the last country expedition of the season a frigate hove in sight to damp our prospect of enjoyment; instead of the demand, up went her number—"Charged with despatches for captain." Every sail dropped on the Cap—; up they went again. Bradshaw caught me by the hand. "I congratulate you, sir, that signal no one can misunderstand."

The mystery was settled. It was the *Tartar*, under the command of Fitzjames, to rejoin his old ship, and finish his time on this station. My crew would replace any I wished

to replace in the *Tartar*, which would, with old hands picked up, belonging to *Diana*, give me an old crew. All this would do to-morrow, so we went our cruize, taking Fitzjames with us. Rain and cold weather rather cooled our ardour for the country, and bad weather in "the Roads" made us uneasy. However, that night, after dancing, I read my letters and issued my instructions, making a complete transfer, the purser, and warrant officers, and marines, &c., excluded, Bradshaw went off to carry out the exchanges.

At noon, I was captain of the *Tartar*, and took command. That evening a grand ball and supper enlivened the place, interrupted, but materially increased in jollity, by the arrival of the scout with my home despatches. Daylight found us all still enjoying ourselves, and then we took our leave. Hardly could they be brought to believe, as they pronounced it, such a wicked desertion!

But foolscap letters sent us off. *Avenger* to join the admiral, with letters, &c., *Scout* for

Naples, with fresh despatches, and *Tartar* for England, off Gibraltar. We hove too for letters, and on to England, making one of the swiftest deliveries of Naples letters then known.

At Portsmouth the Admiral despatched me to London, where I found myself quite another being, so much does one step remove the official barriers. My surname, or second name of Howard was quite enough, and I at length put my feet under the mysterious mahogany of the mysterious First Lord.

For the first time I then became known to the talented secretary, and to another worthy character in the same department; but they were rather jealous about Downing Street interference, and in office were officially cold.

In Downing Street I was well received—saw Lord C.—took me to the Prime Minister, but as the letters afforded them all the information required, I had merely to give the Palermo and Barbary news.

"Well, Captain Howard—I think we may call you so now—I shall meet you at dinner at

Lord C.'s, and then we can talk about your further proceedings; very simple, merely a despatch to New York, but you can view the country, we know little about it here." A polite bow, and gentlest touch of the hand, and I retired with Lord C.

"Come to my house, Howard, I have more to ask you." And he did squeeze every drop of information out of me, even as to the influence wives seemed to have over their husbands, —what I thought the true feelings of the people were—what influence the presence of ships of war had at Naples, &c. &c.

"Well," he said, "do not leave town just yet, or be back in three days, and keep yourself disengaged. You go to New York. But they must not know that through you."

I bowed and retired.

However, I re-entered the Admiralty to learn of my friend what his actual intentions and hopes were regarding Bradshaw.

"Well, Howard, that is a puzzling question; you know how we are situated, pressed

on all sides; I consider that he is sure with you of eventually getting his step."

"Surely," I said, "his father's influence ought to command it."

"No! I am afraid he is not Scotch enough."

"Well, sir, if the ministry ask, will you back it?"

"Ministry *ask!*—Howard, are you mad? The ministry *command.* Let them but hint their wish, as they did with you, leave the rest to me, only give me a fulcrum, some ostensible face for asking."

"Well," thought I, "this may be tried gently, not pressed. I will ask Sir Charles Harrison," and away I flew, and met him full at the bottom of the stairs.

"Is the family in town?"

"All awaiting you, get home, I will come to dinner, perhaps bring some of my family."

"Sir Charles—obey to day! I am entitled to command a frigate."

He bowed and slipped away, and a jolting hackney and two half-drowned horses, dragged

me to Grosvenor Square. No one came to peep at a jarvy, and I advanced unseen into the midst of the enemy,— to be attacked by shrieks, chokings, kissings, faintings, and griping of hands, enough to destroy any delicate young man.

Then as if they had all done wrong, they sat down separately, deliberately took out their handkerchiefs and cried for spite, keeping their faces covered.

"You ever will be a teazing creature, Horatio," said Ellen, looking up very mournfully; "why not write and prepare us? Some day it may do harm. Luckily, your mother was not here, I must go and inform her."

Charlotte opened next—"Well, sir, and nothing, no, not a word after your god-children?"

Fanny had recovered also, and "Pray, sir, who sent you home before your time, to make fools of us all here? If it had not been for spite, I would not have kissed you, would I, Lofty?" and she caught hold of me.

"Well, Fanny, if that be your spite, I

should advise Horace to return it with interest."

Pushing him away, she exclaimed—

"You are getting worse than he is. I shall go for the godchildren."

That was stopped. Ellen informed me that my mother preferred seeing me alone in her boudoir, and the children were there.

That meeting need not be related. I could only escape by exclaiming—"Well, I must go and tell my uncle."

He, good creature, was rejoiced to see me, hailed me captain, and said—"Now, I shall die in peace."

"Oh, no; take a new lease. Keep your spirits up; Sir Charles and some of his family are coming to dine. Will you have any one else, sir?"

"Else?—yes! Gore, and Deedes and Co. Set Noble to work; he is my first-lieutenant during your absence. I suppose you keep your pendant flying?"

"Yes, and off again very soon."

"Well, I suppose I must not ask, but do you expect to be long, because that may be important? Send Ellen and Noble here; and go teaze the girls, that is all the good you can do now."

"Come, Ellen 'Frigate,' and Noble 'Liner,' pass under the lee of Sir Oliver."

"Ay, ay, sir," said Noble, touching his forehead; and tucking Ellen's hand through his arm, they bore up.

"Now, Horatio, come tell us all your sins," said Captain Lofty.

"Why, sir, I am afraid you would hardly believe that I have become a perfect rake—dancing, and keeping it up past daylight, and enjoying life."

"Did you drink much?"

"About as much champagne as I have seen you, sir."

"And smoke cigars?"

"Never, even to gratify a pretty Cuban."

"Then, Howard, leave 'rake' out; say you enjoyed life and innocent gaiety, perhaps

immoderately. If your sins do not exceed these, we shall reform you in our village. Do you not think so, Fanny?"

"Yes; but he has some mental reservations. I detect certain flushes at Cuban—came out; and we know, by his letters, how Leghorn hats become beautiful faces."

"That is why I brought two—one for you, another for Charlotte."

"And another for ——

"Yes, a dozen more, varying in perfection."

"You are a delicious teaze. I wish I knew of some little weakness that I could play on."

"You tried that just now," said Captain Lofty.

"You disagreeable teaze, do spare me, I am tired."

"Well, hold up truce," and up went the fore-finger.

"Well, Horatio, what vessel have you got?"

"The *Tartar*, but I lose her when I come back from next cruize; perhaps in June next."

"Oh, you must be here in May."

"I fear not."

"When do you intend to be quiet?"

"Not until I am permitted. To decline service would be next to madness in my position. What did I enter the profession for?"

"I can tell you; just to make us all constantly uneasy.

"So," said Ellen, entering, "you have mustered the forces already; we are to have another noisy evening—the lost sheep is found."

"Well, I observed, I happened to meet Sir Charles—he said he would come to dinner, and possibly bring a lady or two. I gave him an order, my uncle ordered the rest, and I suppose you, my lady—(frown)—well, my dear Ellen—will finish it according to your will and pleasure."

"I am afraid, Horatio, those Spanish and Italian maids, under Leghorn bonnets, have rather upset your English notions of decorum."

"Well, Ellen, I have gone through one public confession; if it must be repeated, let it be confidential, and under due form."

"No! no! You are getting too cunning; I must keep you at a greater distance; only think you are beyond a boy (she blushed), and a post-captain, though not yet twenty-five." Another cloud passed her brow; she had altered much in manner, was more feminine, more reserved and cautious, I thought; and yet, although care pressed her brow, when she tried to keep down some intrusive thought, she was apparently younger and in better health.

The ladies retired, and my uncle joined, asking very particularly after my proficiency in Spanish, informing me, with one of his peculiar smiles, that Charlotte and Noble talked it so perpetually, that he believed the next child was to be Don Alphonso Colombo Moreton Noble.

"Well," I said, "I have made sufficient progress to argue pretty well with any pretty talkative girl, but it is astonishing how soon you learn that you know nothing, if she be silent and not pretty."

"Oh! oh! Mr. Horatio, I can see that you

can take your own part, but we will try you to-morrow."

"Indeed! Who is the pretty girl?"

"Charlotte, of course."

"Oh, her heart has been gone some time."

"Well, any more trials? any Italians? there, I am getting stronger."

"Indeed! Well, old as I am, I will take up the gauntlet, but perhaps I have not a pretty face.—Well, Horatio, take care, for when the budget is opened, I shall expect to hear of some selection of a frigate fit to command."

He became silent and thoughtful, the plague spread, and we soon found ourselves alone.

"Horatio," he said, "has this subject never seriously come before you?"

"Yes, uncle, but I have no intention to marry, until I think I—that is—the object I may select—a—will make one another happy. And I wish your opinion before I take any decided step."

"I agree with you, that with your pros-

pects and possessions, that you should be very cautious, and not look out for alliances out of your sphere of life. Do not be caught by titles. If they come to you, well and good, but Mr. Johnson and Lady Twickenham sound too ridiculous for husband and wife. If a woman did not take my name, she should never be acknowledged my wife."

"You will also recollect, my dear uncle, that upon attaining the age of twenty-five, there may be allusions in my grandfather's will which may point out his wishes in this matter."

"That I foresee, and knowing my brother's humours so well, I would consider his will in that respect with proper deference. He was a far-thinking, provident person, as you may perceive by his methodical disposal of his property, not willed, even at this moment! Who knows but that there may be a codicil revoking former unexecuted acts, and making me his heir for certain ends. This feeling alone, Horatio, makes me act thus more as your father than great-uncle."

"Indeed, sir, I feel it deeply. But to form any schemes, or to commit myself until those papers are opened, might cause much unhappiness; therefore, am I silent."

We withdrew to dress—a large party was prepared for, I clearly saw on passing the dining-room—and time was short.

CHAPTER XIV.

Our dinner included our own family, Gores, Sir Charles and lady, Deedes and wife—the younger branches in the evening.

There was no ceremony this time. It was merely a friendly gathering, and terminated without dancing—the younger branches having a Chinese lottery and mock auction, admirably got up and acted by my uncle and Noble. As it is entirely new—and I do not intend to take out the patent—I will give it for the amusement of great and small; and I only hope that half as much amusement may result as did on this occasion. It serves only for Christmas, New-

year, Twelfth-night, or some public occasion, such as bidding for a captain, as my uncle once put me up. Noble and he had arranged it all, unknown to any of us, in a few hours!

A printed list of 200 tickets was produced, cut out, and ready for issue. The grand lottery for a post-captain — all prizes, no blanks.—H. H. B.

Each person putting in a sum—any amount he pleases—purchases so many tickets. The lottery is drawn by a pretty wheel of fortune; a pretty child, with a gauze band over the eyes, hands out the numbers, and they represent pounds, half-pounds, and crowns—square, round, and long counters. These are duly paid at the office—cheques for sums above five pounds, &c. This alone is exciting; but the parties all being more or less rich, can afford to bid at the auction. To render this part easier, each article is put up at its initial bid, and being enveloped in a bag, until knocked down, cannot be picked up.

In the management of this, the auctioneer

and the showman, who is very careful not to commit himself or injure the object, evince great tact, sometimes running up a low price to great competition, carefully watching, however, not to exceed the value, and render it no prize.

In the present case the tickets were nominally bought and presented by my uncle; but unknown to the juniors, all of whom heard papa or mamma exclaim against the ruinous expense.

Workboxes, cases, fans, pencil-cases, books, gloves, all articles of actual use, comprised the selection, no children or very young persons being present. All the household were included, but the auctioneer so peculiarly recommended these articles, that they knew when to bid.

Some very handsome and valuable presents were thus made, and a long evening too soon fluttered away on the wings of enjoyment. But as no one would bid for the post-captain beyond his ticket, Ellen bought him "to save the credit of the family," as she said. This

was a frame which was to contain my likeness, and for which I was bound to sit the ensuing morning. This Ellen put carefully into her desk—and I heard no more of it until informed by my uncle that a man would call for me on the following morning.

In the course of the evening I got beside Sir Charles, and inquired how he would advise me to proceed with regard to Bradshaw? It startled him. But thinking a little, he said,

"Better leave this to me. It is a thorny road. I may be asked some day, 'how any trifling compliment could be paid?' that precedes more important business, which you must promise not to impede by asking any favour of *ministers*.—At the Admiralty take all you can get—there you are safe.

"Now give me his name, family, pretensions,—and the mode of doing it most gratifying to you, as well as to himself, if you can imagine that. If it is to be done, let it be done well — quite as cheap — words cost nothing."

"Very good, Sir Charles, I will send it to

you before breakfast, as an opportunity may arise before I could see you again."

"But why not now?"

"Certainly;" so running to my sanctum, I filled up a note with his qualities, claims, kindred, &c., adding that he was my right arm, and I could not lose him now. But he might retire unless some hope was held out—say, date his rank the day we sail, and let him get it on his return. That I know would suit him, for whilst I am afloat he says, 'but for his time he would prefer being with me.'"

"A trump, then?"

"His very outline was cast in the good fellow mould.

"He is all heart, a blue eye, and a good seaman, enjoying the confidence of captain, officers, and crew."

"How I should like to hear such a speech as that, given with such fervour, in the British House of Commons! But all you naval men, although so peculiarly at home in touching our feelings by your addresses outside those walls,

never give us a stunning reply to many calumnies against your profession there!"

"That I cannot understand; but few have ventured; and, perhaps, the talents arrayed against them would render them as ridiculous as other honourable gentlemen, by denials, as untrue, as I frequently observe many of these malignant calumnies to be. Some, too, I am afraid, think more of humorous speeches, so that they may be reported."

"Well, I promise you to work this for you; but asking favours, you know, may not always be judicious;" and he smiled, and pressed my hand. Then, changing the subject, he continued,

"What a wonderful man your uncle is and *was;* and yet, the life and soul of old and young, he never married—that we know of. Look at him now, with those children, and he is childish!—some deep secret grieves his spirit—some disheartening story yet to be revealed to you. He has not—I have reason to know, from his physician—any ailment tending to shorten life. I am older—so is

Gore—and yet he thinks his end is near! He has much improved in strength, and may yet outlive us all. Much depends, he tells me, on the attainment of your twenty-fifth year. It may convulse the families; and in your intercourse with the world, you must be very cautious not to offend or quarrel, as that seems to be the ground-work of all your grandfather's proceedings—instigated, no doubt, by your uncle's quarrelling with him. I think you will excuse this plainness, for no one else would like to tell such facts; but I feel so deep an interest in your ultimate fate, that I am sure you will attribute it solely to affection."

"Thank you, Sir Charles, I do feel it as you wish, and I see, perhaps, far beyond the facts revealed by you. I am ever on my guard—I see no chance of quarrel."

Looking me steadfastly in the face—"Not across the Atlantic?"

The idea shot like electricity through me.—"Possibly, now I do, but I must go through

the fire. This trial may be severe, but I have no misgivings. Letters to the best families will keep me out of bad society; and in my travels, if I go inland, I shall be accompanied by friends who will afford me sufficient conversation."

Mr. Deedes then reported entire success; and that, in consequence of his possessing the secret key to the correspondence of the gang, he was still engaged by other families, and confidentially by the Crown lawyers.

CHAPTER XV.

As the progress of time drew us nearer to the completion of my twenty-fifth year, I could see that I was the subject of constant anxiety to Ellen and my uncle Oliver. But whilst the solicitude of the former was almost dumb, that of the latter grew daily more garrulous. He was constantly referring to my future destiny, and more especially to the subject of my marriage, and I could not help perceiving that there was some one, whose fate both Ellen and my uncle Oliver considered to be linked with mine.

Who could this unknown, predestined wife,

by my grandfather's selection, possibly be? When was she to appear? Was she hideous, so that I should reject her, and forfeit the estates? Better have kept the secret. It was now December, and May not far distant, and yet, notwithstanding this, I must visit America.

In the mean time our domestic affairs proceeded satisfactorily.

The new schools were in Decimus Leo's prettiest style, and, approved by all, left under the supervision of Captain Lofty. The alterations at Mr. Gore's were progressing, and they were very anxious to have my opinion. But my uncle's taste was preferable, it was a compliment which pleased him, and I had not spare time for rattling about the country. I called at the Admiralty—they were surprised to find me in London, thinking I had gone to Portsmouth last night, and were rather inclined to be severe. But I let them know that Lord C. had desired me not to leave town until further orders, and I thought he had intimated it here. But bowing, "I perceive I have grossly

erred, in not asking official leave, as I am not under Treasury orders."

"Thank you, Howard, that tells in more ways than you dream of; we shall telegraph, 'Captain on duty until further orders.' And ringing the bell, "Tell Mr. Clifftown to send me this for immediate siguature."

In a short time I received an order, dated the day preceding, to call at the Treasury, and follow their instructions until further orders —signed by the secretary, &c.

"Now, sir, you can sleep securely."

This was settled; I saw the first lord, who was not surprised to see me, but evidently expected me, as he said,

"Lord C—— intends you to dine with him before you leave town."

At the said dinner some demur as to a frigate's safely entering New York in winter, arose, but the naval lord, present, said,

"Oh! no, my lord, you never thought of that when we were blockading it."

"Give him the work to do, and I think he

knows how to do it well. He has a staunch little first-lieutenant, too."

Sir Charles, who was present, said,

"Yes, Sir G., I think those nurses sometimes deserve to get up the tree, too. I do not mean to say that Bradshaw is an old hand, but his claims are good."

Sir G. bowed.

It was determined that I should start immediately, and to sail, if it suited, on Sunday. The despatches would be ready on Saturday—and if I remained in town, and did not dislike night travelling, I might take them; but it was clearly understood by the naval lord, that that it was preferable I should receive them through the official channels—under Treasury seal.

On Saturday morning I had taken leave with a heavy heart, and was posting at a furious rate to Portsmouth—what impelled me I could hardly understand, but I wished to be at my post. I was seven hours on the road. Met the Doctor, who thought some madman

had driven up. The admiral sent to know if any king's messenger had arrived; and intimated his wish that Dr. Howard and myself would take a quiet dinner—the signal was made, asking Bradshaw to dine—and we assembled at the 'George' before dinner.

"Come, Bradshaw, what officers on shore?"

"All, sir, but the ship keepers, and two here for orders."

"Well, quick is the motion—sail to-morrow after prayers—stragglers join me here at nine—last boat."

"All right, sir," and he ran down to give his orders. We popped across the street, and were soon constituted into a cheerful party of ten.

"I beg your pardon, admiral, but I forgot to report my obedience to your last order, 'to bring home a frigate.'"—he bowed.

"May all good officers be rewarded for implicit obedience. I understand, sir, you have a queer old trump, an uncle, one Oliver Brenton?"

"Yes, sir, I shook the good old man by the hand this morning."

"I thought so! that sent you off like a rocket, and frightened us all here; and does he still persist in calling himself *old?* He is a child compared to me. I have known him from a boy. As a captain I was entertained by him in India, and, please God, if I go to town, will call upon him—let me have his address?"

"Grosvenor Square will find him, and rejoiced he will be to find any one who recollects him."

"Nonsense, Howard—who can forget him? a man who has been doing every charitable, kind, and generous action under the sun, be forgotten! I shall write to my brother also, and old English friends, to call on him immediately; he will bring a host on him—forgotten, eh! that, however, is one of his weak points. Pray, what pursuit does he follow now? Have a care, young fellow, he is a magician—no one ever knew him at fault—

he knows every language under the sun—will read any letter you put before him, and, possibly, answer it. Philosopher, astronomer, carpenter, mason, anything, he is a master of arts; and, when he pleases, can play at leap-frog with any boy, or beat him at cricket. Come, Howard, have I overdrawn him?"

"Well, sir, your likeness is wonderful, but Doctor Howard is nearer his day, and my relative knew him, I think, years ago, and must have known you." And the conversation changed.

Our evening passed in this style, developing at every turn some to us fresh exciting incident, but tedious to the reader.

Being anxious to talk matters over with Bradshaw, I excused myself and took leave.

On reaching the 'George,' I explained to Bradshaw simply the state of his interest, urged him to make a violent push on his friends, and it might tell, keeping him entirely in the dark as to my motions.

Poor fellow! he felt it very keenly, but simply added—

"Sir, going ashore would forfeit every claim; I must hold on this cruize, at least, and see what fortune sends me."

"Well, good-night, nine to-morrow, no ducklings this time, Bradshaw."

"Oh! yes, I shall find them presently."

At nine Doctor Howard was with me, much pleased with the feeling exhibited by the admiral.

"But how could you be so impudent?"

"Impudent! I read the man's heart, and I was not deceived."

"Well, Horatio, go for your orders and quick about it, for Sunday is a busy day in the flag-ship; I should be on board, only the admiral has detained me until you are gone."

I received my orders, sealed orders and sealed despatches, &c. &c., with about a load of parcels, which went down in barrows from the admiral's office to our boats. Our breakfast was soon despatched, the doctor took a

hurried farewell, and we were on board just in time for the customary routine. After prayers we weighed, and under easy sail passed Cowes, until our crew had dined. Then all sail was crammed, but in January no great spread is made owing to prevailing rules.

It was our good fortune to clear the Channel, and get well to the westward before we took the westerly gale; we then edged on to Madeira—renewed relations with Duff, Gordon and Co.—passed a pleasant evening—thence to Teneriffe—remained a day, and then closed the trades, carried them to the meridian of Bermuda, and hauled up for New York—making a beautiful passage without straining a yarn. But one packet was to be opened on passing the meridian of Bermuda. That intimated the promotion of Lieut. Bradshaw to commander on January 1; and that he would receive his official document on his return to England. This was 'private and confidential;' but that I might take the liberty of treating him as a commander; and that,

in the event of accident to me, an official document would enable him to carry out my instructions as acting captain. So far, all right. I determined to keep this for some gala occasion. I called on our worthy consul, and my despatches were forwarded to Washington, where it was intimated I would pay my respects. At a very select party given at the consul's, and when all the officers had assembled in the evening, I begged to introduce a stranger, or rather to expose a man under a garment that did not properly fit him. Each one gazed for an intruder—no one more alert than Bradshaw; but, turning him round, I said—"Why, sir, this is not your uniform." He went to the glass to ascertain.

"Yes, sir!—my button—my epaulette—everything, I think right;" and yet the consul smiled as if something was awry, and turned round like a dog chasing his tail.

"It is Commander Bradshaw, in disguise, ladies and gentlemen, left England with me a commander on the 1st of January, and here he

disguises himself as a lieutenant. What does he deserve?"

"To be smothered in champagne!" exclaimed the consul;" and he was read in ——

Poor fellow! his heart was too big, and he could tell his mind, too, in forcible language. "Well," he said, "you have kept a secret—there is no woman in you!" and he bit his fingers and hid his head—for there were many murderous eyes there to defend their sex. However, he blundered out compliment after compliment, each a failure, until they laughed immoderately; and he was 'at home' everywhere from that evening.

My journey to Washington was at this season very unpleasant, cold, and dreary. But it was completed, and I returned to New York, where I had to wait for a considerable time, which admitted of my taking Bradshaw to Boston, where many Brenton acquaintance were attentive. We visited the dockyard and immediate neighbourhood—intended to have gone to Albany and Saratoga, but were in-

formed we should meet with nothing but empty houses. I found we ought to have gone to New Orleans and that neighbourhood, and it was their season. But I was glad to get back to my ship, thinking very seriously about the caution of Sir Charles Harrison. Daily were we on the verge of scrapes. As to posting, that could not be done. One might purchase a vehicle and horses, &c.—but this was tedious. When I reached the consul's office, the first word he said—"Hope no unpleasant rufflings with the Americans. You must learn to submit to a great deal here." For this reason, I avoided every American house.

CHAPTER XVI.

New York is certainly an agreeable place, so long as you keep in agreeable society, and when once installed as a *friend*, you feel infinitely more at home than in England. But should you be driven to a boarding-house, keep your counsel, until you know the object of the man addressing you. And, let me ask, to what does this impertinent habit of insolent intrusion tend?

I will tell you, reader—to lay the foundation of deceit, in order to mislead the impertinent—to lay the groundwork of systematic lying. To others I leave the task of further criticism.

The increase of this city is likely to be rapid, but it is not likely to lead to any magnificence. No classic taste—shop—shop—East end for the next century, perhaps. Those who now have palaces internally might very well be mistaken for private hospitals externally. Intense heat in summer, and intense cold in winter, cannot very well be met in any building; they are, therefore, protected against the latter, and are as gloomy as old London houses can be in summer, for the sun must be excluded. To hear the young fry talk of what the city is to be, one would imagine a new world about to be created, but time will tell. "The Battery" now seems to be the sensible limit of sound thinkers. Shall I ever revisit it? That I thought fit to ask myself. Never, I hope—cautiously adding my *Nisi tempora mutantur et nos mutamus in illis.*

A month had slipped away agreeably, when our despatches arrived, and at a farewell party, one gentleman rather pertinaciously endea-

voured to engage me in argument, relative to late wars. Bradshaw coldly interposed, with the consul at his back. "Come, Captain Howard, if you talk shop here, I shall claim the fine." We separated, took leave of our host, and departed. I heard Bradshaw tell his new acquaintance, "Well, if you wish to pursue the conversation, come and breakfast on board; God knows what I might say here that might be offensive to any one inclined to cavil at words.' He gave a bitter smile, bowed and departed.

At daylight we were moving gently down the Sound, and that night needed not rocking. At breakfast, where Bradshaw was always a guest, Bradshaw inquired if I ever saw this stranger before

"No!" I observed, "but he seemed much disposed to quarrel."

"Well, sir! the consul knows no more of him than on his visiting his office, to inquire after you, he said, 'he knew your friends'—and the consul observed—'Well, your only

chance of meeting him will be at my house this evening.' He gave his name Villiers—he knows nothing of him—but he is not American.

"It was the consul sent me to cut your yarn."

"Prettily you did it, too—many thanks—I think he may want his breakfast this morning—and if he be one of the gang who have vowed my destructiou, he will not venture to seek me in England!"

"Vowed to destroy you, sir? Why did I not know that, he should have had an early breakfast, and not have been disappointed."

"Nonsense, Bradshaw! never meddle with the quarrels of any man. Your interference might have detained the ship, and ruined me. I am pledged not to accept, or be directly or indirectly engaged in a duel; and could not have met that man before the 10th day of May next. But we must change the conversation. Many wounded—any shot?"

"Oh, sir! nothing serious—many scratches

—but our young fellows, I find, were provided with anti-Yankee protectors."

"What are they, Bradshaw?"

"Why, likenesses of pretty girls at home, sir. They measured them well, sir, and found they did not come up to muster. Can't tell more, sir—fine set of lads. That Gray, Gore, and the sergeant's son.—They will be trumps by-and-bye—young Mike, too."

"Well, Bradshaw, remind me, the day we pass the meridan, of Bermuda—and all hands—those on duty excepted—dine with me on that day."

"Well, sir, curiosity will not help a fellow with you—that I know—you have got the sobriquet of 'Diplomat,' or 'Mat;'—all I know is, they can't, if they were inclined to act rightly, make an admiral of you, or I would volunteer to be your flag-captain."

"No rash vows, Bradshaw. You recollect the case of your old admiral."

The day of passing the meridian or longi tude of Bermuda arrived, and the officers dined at my table. After dinner I gave them the

customary loyal toasts, and then added—"Gentlemen, I had the great satisfaction, on the day we passed this meridian, south of Bermuda, to open a note. That note informed me that our excellent friend Bradshaw was promoted on the 1st of January; and if he continued to be a good boy, that on his arrival in England he would receive his commission. It was very considerate of the Admiralty, for our sakes, to manage it thus, as we should otherwise have lost our right arm—his society—and as the comfort and happiness of a ship depends solely on the first-lieutenant, there is no knowing what misery might have resulted—we will, without cheers, if you please, drink his health, with the decorum and feeling due to an extinct *good* first-lieutenant. All I can say is, he is too indulgent for a captain, and I would not trust a relative of mine with him."

To give Bradshaw's speech would be unfair—it was something like that of a fluent Irishman late in the evening. It was Bradshaw.

Moreover, he would not know his own words again, if arrayed against him. His health was feelingly drunk, and as Haskins said, that as he was sorry Bradshaw's voice failed, perhaps the next small voice might be listened to, and concluded with, "We all feel with the captain, may his shadow never be less," there was such a tumultuous exhibition of applause, that really he did indeed look very small.

CHAPTER XVII.

On the 28th of March we struck soundings; 30th, anchored at Spithead; and at 11 a.m. on the 31st I was at the Admiralty—saw the first lord, and transacted business in Downing Street —satisfactory. The *Tartar* would pay off forthwith—but was, I understood, to be recommissioned, and any wishing to remain might put their names down. As a gallant friend of mine was likely to have her, I advised all to join, if vacancies offered.

I had a week's duty — left Commander Bradshaw to prepare for paying off, and to be considered, during the absence of the captain,

"in command," thus securing to him precedence to sloops.

The family was absent, but a note stated that my uncle and Ellen might arrive during the week. Sir Charles Harrison and the Gores were still in town. With the latter I passed my time, Sir Charles generally dropping in during the evening. Until the ship was ready to pay off I was better away, and it would give Bradshaw importance, the Admiral insisting, as he had his commission, that he wore his uniform.

I found he had told the story of his being assailed for being in disguise, and perhaps better worked up than plain fact requires. On the third day Ellen and my uncle arrived during my absence. No surprise, therefore, took place, as they had received my letters. There was a tone of melancholy, deep thought, and reserve, I thought, about both, but still warmly affectionate. They referred to the 4th of May with a seriousness which seemed to excite both—Ellen to an involuntary pearl

in the corner of her lustrous eye.—Dangerous, those drops; when they ooze from the eye of any one we love, they produce the inclination to kiss them away. Our kissing days had ceased, but with the distance, feelings never before experienced had crept in and taken their place. Mystery had added its excitement, and until the eventful day arrived, I determined to find occupation away from home. This decision seemed to satisfy both my uncle and Ellen, and the day following they returned to the rectory—with the understanding that we all met in London on the 3rd of May, at dinner, in order to be present at the unsealing of this ominous document on the appointed day.

Rejoining my ship, which they were in no hurry to pay off, hoping to secure her fine crew, fourteen days flew.

I enjoyed myself much with the admiral and good doctor, and occasionally at the commissioners. I had a relative of his on board. We dined together at the 'George'—Captain

and officers—on the paying off—one condition was stipulated, no cheering— pretty speeches, if they could frame them, being allowed, and hearty toasts drank feelingly—and that our separation should bear rather a cast of warm feeling, than boisterous, unmeaning riot. Noble came to join us, and *Avenger* came in for cold soup. I took leave that night, individually, of each member, making them understand that I expected to see them whenever they could find me in town or country, to tell me their wishes—promises I never make—and that when openings offered, I would not forget to drop them a line. Noble, Bradshaw, and myself repaired to town. There we met Captain Lofty, and the *levee* occurring —all were presented at Carlton House. This was the first I saw of our Prince Regent. He poked his hand out, and it was touched very delicately beneath with the fingers, and above with the lips. I had been cautioned. Noble took his paw, and pressed it, much to the indignation of royalty—"No manners. . . . C., tell that fellow his zeal is painful." Busi-

ness occupied me still at the Admiralty and Downing Street; but to what purpose I neither know—nor is it material I should—for I would not reveal.

Poor Bradshaw was now a fish out of water, and I verily believe would have been glad to have secreted his date, and continued as first-lieutenant—Fitzjames as bad. The wound of the latter made him very irritable: he retired from the service; and I shall have a few words to say respecting him and his subsequent career, at the conclusion of my own story.

I must pass over other exciting events of this period, the actors in which were my intimate friends—and on service where I was anxious to take part—but our objects were in the end rank — I, fortunately, taking the lead, instead of becoming second fiddle. I was still eager for any command, and Africa, or anything on which to make a name for myself would greedily be seized. Sir Charles Harrison curbed all my de-

sires by one gentle touch of his finger on the back of my hand. "Patience, my young friend!—Do not try for anything without my advice. All you have done lately—although unsuccessful in your eyes—has not been lost sight of by the higher powers. I am desired to inform you, that you are to hold yourself in readiness at any moment for special service, and any command worthy of your acceptance will first be offered to you; therefore, no nonsense upon service, where any adventurer may go, to gain promotion and a name. You have both—more you must wait for."

Some club, to which Captain Lofty subscribed, had invited Noble, Bradshaw, and myself, to dine—somewhere out of Piccadilly. I met many old friends, made many new ones, and, by way of finish, got Captain Lofty to ask the *élite* to dine with me in Grosvenor Square. The day had arrived—our number was fourteen; my uncle and Ellen arrived, Mr. and Mrs. Gore, made eighteen; for I found that all increase must be by fours, so

as not to divide couples—six, ten, fourteen, eighteen, twenty-two; Sir Charles and Lady, and the younger branches, in the evening.

Fortunately, my uncle found two more Indian groupers, and our evening passed gaily.

But this last arrival seemed to be the crisis —to-morrow we would form a family party. The next day was to be devoted to business.

How many passed a restless night I cannot tell. Not one doze of ten minutes was it my lot to experience; and as morn broke through the heaviness of a spring fog, and the sun peered over the tops of the houses, throwing a reddish ray obliquely through my window, I eagerly jumped up, dressed myself, and sallied forth to recover myself, by stretching my limbs in Hyde Park. The morning was indeed balmy; Nature seemed to smile propitiously on my natal day. How would it end? was a question frequently asked.

And yet I had nothing to fear; I had not done wrong. Fortune I possessed in a greater proportion than I desired. What was it I

did fear? I feared the increase shackling my liberty of action—enslaving me, for money's sake, for the remainder of my life—changing my nature, possibly, from an inclination to be generous, to avarice and sordid meanness. Why should I be exempt from the feelings of the greatest, but most contemptible of the age?

The passing of a milkmaid afforded me a draught of the pure fluid, warm from the cow, unadulterated. Thus relieved, and caring less for breakfast, which I might be unable to swallow, I returned home in better spirits, and certainly in better condition, than any of the 'pale faces' assembled around the breakfast table. Dress seemed to have been disregarded, and each individual rather clothed for a December than a bright May morning. A sparrow perched on the lamp-post, and spying in, ruffled into a ball, caused an involuntary laugh.

"What is it you are laughing at?" said Charlotte, putting her lips to my cheek.

I pointed to the sparrow.

"Well, I cannot see anything. It appears cold, miserable, and all in a heap."

I pointed round the table, apparently counting each individual with my fore-finger, and added—

"I have just come in from the Park, had my cup of fresh milk, and it is a hot summer's day; but I find you here, to use your own expression, all of a heap."

This broke the dismal gloom, and each one had a look at the sparrow, never, perhaps, in London season so much honoured.

The knocker and bell announced Mr Deedes, and a very suspicious japanned tin box marked 'Deeds—Brenton, &c.' My sanctum was allotted for preparation.

The rector had not arrived; and the doctor was also, for reasons not set forth, required. About ten both appeared, in earnest conversation, and joined the ladies in the drawing-room.

The only will of my grandfather discovered

was first produced. It gave, without any perplexing clauses, full powers to the Rev. Dr. Howard, Rector of Ashdown Vale, and Miss Ellen Percy, or a person recognized by him at present by that name, full powers over certain estates under conditions sufficiently alluded to, but specially under the control of the latter-named person, until Horatio Howard Brenton, his grandson, attained the age of twenty-one, then to succeed—but in case of his sister marrying, certain estates might be conveyed to her—for her children, provided they took the name of Brenton after their family name.

The remaining bulk of the property was not to be affected by the heir until the attainment of his twenty-fifth year, when a codicil, having no relation to the previous estates, would be found, which would determine the legal succession. The opening of a letter sealed and addressed to Miss Ellen Percy, to be produced on the fourth day of May, 1819, and not before, would furnish further instructions.

That letter, Ellen, with some confusion and

much agitation, now produced, handing it to my uncle, who passed it to Mr. Deedes. Bowing for approbation he cut the seals and read from the enclosed paper.

"On this 4th day of May, 1819, the parties legally authorized, or their heirs, &c., will open sealed packet A."

That packet was on the table in charge of Mr. Deedes.

It was opened. It provided that all the estates of my grandfather, whatsoever, should pass into my hands, taking the name of Brenton, as might hereafter be deemed advisable, before or after the name of Howard. But that if I did not take the name of Brenton after Howard, I was at liberty to transfer those which related specially to that name to my sister's children, or to such existing relations nearest of kin who consented to hold under this necessary injunction.

But the terms on which the entire property would devolve, would be found in sealed packet B.

Packet B was then opened.

This was the alarming document—indeed, the terms: If I had already contracted marriage part only of the property reverted to Horatio Howard Brenton, the remainder to Ellen Percy, her husband and children taking the name of Brenton, provided she contracted marriage after the said Horatio Howard Brenton had done so.

But if Oliver, his younger brother, should then be living and in England, until his death, he should control the estates, free from any marital interference, and should be considered, under the existing circumstances, as controlling and carrying out the intentions of the testator.

If Horatio Howard Brenton should then be unmarried or not contracted, he should, on complying with paper C, inherit without further trouble, law, or expense, as heir direct, the entire property and all titles thereunto appertaining, which had not been assumed by the testator, not having followed the profession indicated as set forth in paper D.

Paper C disclosed a family mystery, which the reader will find explained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It is now necessary that I should resume the history of the events, which took place in our family before my grandfather's death, and which led to his making those extraordinary provisions in his will, which have been briefly stated at the close of the last chapter.

The first news of the flight of Clara with Henry Brenton fell like a grievous sickness on old Mr. Brenten, and he never rallied from the shock. He was an essentially vain man, and his vanity was sorely humbled. He had proposed to himself to make the latter part of

his life atone for the selfishness of the earlier portion, and all the plans he had laid with that view were now discomfited. Should he lay new plans? Should he adopt some new expedient for amusing his latter years?

For some time life passed on in Brenton Hall in a kind of dream. Nothing was heard of the fugitives; no one enquired after them. Margaret lived a life of cold sternness, and Charles Lancaster a life of imbecile idleness. The time of bitterness was passed; but it was worse with them now than then; their brows were not knit, but their foreheads were wrinkled; their words were not fierce, but their voices were harsh; their cheeks were not pale, but their complexions were sallow; their hearts were not tortured with agony, but their minds numbed with hoplessness. They did not sympathize with each other—they did not even hate each other.

At length, something occurred to change this sullen state of affairs. Something always *does* occur to break the cold monotony of

human existence — although, sometimes, in agony, we are tempted to cry aloud that there is no hope. News began to arrive of Clara and Henry Brenton, and once again the current of life seemed to flow through Brenton Hall. The anguish came back to the eyes of Charles, and love tinged again Margaret's cheek, and old Mr. Brenton was once more stern, and fierce, and business-like.

The news, when it came, was harsh enough, and well calculated to arouse the reluctant echoes of an ancient country mansion. I will not amplify it, and I cannot tone it down. Henry Brenton had carried off with him deeds relating to the family estates—which, nevertheless, were not strictly entailed on himself—and raised money on them, and forged; and the revelation of these things was the first news of Clara and Henry Brenton.

The parental feeling had never been very strong in old Mr. Brenton, and, under ordinary circumstances, he would not have hesitated a moment in hurling on his son the full

vengeance of the law; but he stayed his hand, for the voice of Clara — a broken-hearted woman and a wailing mother now— came to his ears, praying mercy. So, assuming all his old activity, he contented himself with taking effectual measures for the future security of his property; and was on the point of sinking down into his old state of careless exhaustion, when he was once more aroused to a passion of indignation, which only died out with his life.

When Henry Brenton found that solicitude for the family honour could extract no more money from his father's purse, he played his trump card—declared that his marriage with Clara had been a feigned or illegal one, and that, unless an ample settlement were made upon her, he would desert her and repudiate his children. No answer was made to this threat, for it was regarded as a mere shallow trick, and without any foundation in truth. But, alas! it was not so; and one cheerless day, the Clara who had been so beautiful and

bright, returned to Brenton Hall, a haggard and rather slattern woman, too wretched to be ashamed that she was a mother before she was a wife.

Margaret Brenton's life, however stirred with sorrow and passion, had been free from contact with the sordid troubles of human existence; and it was with something of a goddess air and feeling that she, proud and pure, stood in the presence of Clara, the humbled and degraded. The sense of superiority is a sweet incense to the heart, and invokes it to graciousness and charity. So Margaret was kind to Clara, and consoled and cheered her, and they grew friends again with a friendship of habit, and that is stronger than a friendship of love.

Misfortunes strengthen strong characters, and crush weak ones. Charles Lancaster's nature was a very weak one, and it was now feeble in the extreme. It never occurred to him to avoid Clara, and he allowed himself to form one of the family circle, as though no-

thing had ever happened, as though he had neither loved nor been rejected. And it would have been well if things had gone on thus; but another instance was to show that, whilst misfortunes cannot break weak natures so, neither can it teach them.

I blush to write what I must now write, but it is the very turning point of my history.—With returning health and strength, returned to Clara that facility of character which had been the great charm of her early youth and beauty; but it was now reckless frivolity. She was exposed to a temptation which few women can resist; she was now, without youth or beauty, in the presence of one who had loved her when she possessed both, and she could not refrain from attempting to revive in her favour some of those feelings from which she had formerly shrank with so much distaste. Old Mr. Brenton saw it, and was rejoiced at any sign of revival in the life of one whom he considered to have been destroyed by Brenton selfishness. Margaret saw it and was glad, for

it came as a veil between her and one whom she no longer loved.

This retrospect is very displeasing to me, and I would fain avoid it, but I cannot. Briefly then let me say that Clara's two little boys having been placed, under the name of Fitzjames, by old Mr. Brenton, with some friends of his residing at Portsmouth, their mother married Charles Lancaster. There was one child of this marriage, and she was christened *Ellen Percy*.

To atone to Clara for the evil which he considered had been brought upon her by Brenton selfishness, now became a sort of monomania with old Mr. Brenton, for the brief remainder of his life. And when Margaret at length consented to give her hand to Mr. Howard, a worthy gentleman of the neighbourhood, who had long loved her, her father began to entertain that scheme which he laid down in his will, and by which my life has to so great an extent been influenced.

CHAPTER XIX.

"SHOULD Horatio Howard Brenton marry Ellen Percy, my will is complete. Should the parties, if single, demur, three years shall be allowed for consideration.

"If not then determined, the property, if the said Ellen Percy decline, to be divided, as set forth in the event of either party having already contracted marriage."

As Mr. Deedes read those concluding words of paper C, Ellen fainted, and was conveyed away by the ladies. All retired but my uncle and myself, and we remained very fidgetty neither caring to break the gloomy silence for

some time. What my feelings, were, I could not tell—I seemed to have suffered some fatal accident. There was desperate affection between us, that was undeniable. I had mentally vowed celibacy until she married, and I knew she had vowed not to marry until I did. But the disproportion in age, which was now reduced to eight years, seemed to bar a nearer connexion, as well as her maternal kindness and habits, during my nonage. My uncle broke the ice. "Now, Horatio, tell me your feelings, for I plainly see on both sides you will have to throw off intimacy, and commence courtship in another vein, before you two can marry, strong as your minds are. Indeed, I should be sorry to see it take place prematurely but I am as much bent on your union as your grandfather, and it *will* eventually take place. Had you both not the fear of the world before your eyes, absurd prejudice, you would have rushed into each other's arms, and died of overwhelming joy." He shed tears, and sobbed heavily! He continued, "Horatio! I was

once married! and for some short, very short time, felt what happiness is! But I married a heartless creature, false to her God and to her vows, and she would have rendered me a pauper if she could, in her mad revulsion from feigned devotion, to the most refined hatred! *This* carried me to India; if she lives, she is as miserable as she deserves. I have been as desolate, except for my means of doing good, as her bitterest wish could have devised. Now, Horatio, think deeply, think well. No harsh or hurried resolves. You love each other, and none other; that is the basis. It is, indeed, a curious case, but it assumes such a novel feature, as almost marrying an aunt, if even younger—indeed, a mother!"

"It would almost be necessary to pick a quarrel, estrange ourselves for a time, and then, on reconciliation, think about terms of peace."

"Very good, Horatio, some estrangement, will, I think, be necessary, but you must wait until you hear from Ellen. In her hand your

fate lies; you must prepare to travel, leave affairs to me, and take Noble and Charlotte with you to the continent, letters must do the rest, for correspondence will be kept up, and I am not going to have a bachelor and maiden doing the honours of this house any longer. I tell you, now—all this I *knew*—you have heard me call Ellen "the wonderful woman," you will find her very different when her guardian cares have left her brow unclouded."

"What, more mystery, still—more legal miseries—that would almost cure me of love thoughts. Well, I make no rash vows."

Noble, and Captain Lofty, with the rector, now entered; I left my uncle to talk to them, and sought Charlotte, to ascertain the state of Ellen.—Charlotte commenced—

"Dear Horatio, I must prepare you for a great shock—it has surprised us all—but she refuses to see you, or to hear your name to be alluded to, until we have her permission. She labours under the impression, that you must fancy that she was cognizant of your grand-

father's purpose, and that her early affection and and freedom up to the age where endearment should cease, where the boy passes into manhood, particularly that chaotic movement caused by the surprise, must degrade her in your eyes. Indeed, the painful impression, that everyone must consider her a hypocrite, may break her heart. For the present, she conceives that your absence, with the impression that she refuses—and you are not yet satisfied before the world—may enable her to recover her peace of mind. Now, she must see your uncle, and in the presence of Doctor Howard, who is with her and my mother."

So I called him out, sent him, as ordered, to Ellen, and beckoning Noble, asked him if my uncle had proposed our going to the continent.

"Yes, but who will take care of the children?"

"Plural? I never heard of more than one."

"Yes! another at home, the youngest is only here, a girl."

"Well, surely one you could take. Fanny will look after the other."

"She has a pair also, and has our eldest in charge at the rectory."

"And pray, why not reported? Master Noble.

"Oh, we thought it time enough to distract you with family matters. However, we will go if we can—*Try.*"

So we gained the main body—now increased by Mr. Deedes and Sir Charles Harrison—the latter commenced—

"My dear Howard, it seems that my visit turns out very *apropos*, in every way. I know the whole affair, and had my suspicions years ago. I am come to ask you if you would like to visit the principal Courts in your route to Naples, under Foreign-office patronage. To a poor man it would be a great offer, as he would travel at Government expense. This you can do also—but travelling as an independent gentleman, and taking the simple allowance as you would your pay on your

return, would better suit the views of Government. You must give me an answer to-morrow, and you must also be prepared to accompany me to Lord C—— at two to-morrow, on important business—*home affairs*. I must be off now, but I will see you at breakfast to-morrow. Noble! I have you also in my eye —you will have to accompany him. No excuse." And he retired.

"Now, Noble, I suppose we may say that we are 'under orders.'"

"With all my heart, Mr. Land Commodore. How long, sir, will you give me to prepare, and take leave of my wife?" touching his forehead.

"That, sir, depends upon whether any women are permitted on board—on shore, I mean."

My uncle entered.

"Clear the coast—get away—and leave this troublesome fellow to me." As the door closed he looked cautiously round for any intruder, and said—"Well, Horatio! it is a

painful afair, but as Charlotte, I find has told you more than Ellen confided to me, I must simply say, that provided you will go abroad until she recovers herself, and can form her final resolution, she will take leave of you at the last moment, and in my presence only."

"Very good, my dear uncle; this accords perfectly with my feelings. Sir Charles has just been here. I am required on some quiet mission to the foreign Courts, between this and Naples; and Noble, I suppose, is to be my secretary—whether with or without incumbrance, is not yet known. I am to be at Downing Street to-morrow."

"Come, come, Horatio! This will be a May day yet; and, possibly, 1820 may change our notes; a smarter little sparrow, impertinently peeping in, may cause another laugh to escape you. All our feathers may be smoothed down by that period. Heads up, and a little more attention to dress. *I* may, perhaps, be much livelier."

At breakfast next morning Sir Charles in-

formed me that he had an important question to put to my uncle and myself; and Charlotte being the only lady present, carried the rest off with her. We withdrew to my uncle's room, which prevented interruption by visitors. We were seated. Sir Charles commenced—

"Well, Horatio, the Government are anxious at present to confer some mark of approbation on you; and, with your possessions, they think that, at present, they will offer a baronetcy, and at a later date, probably a peerage."

My uncle interposed—"Until Sir Horatio Howard proves his right to the baronetcy, which is, I believe, in the family—I think he must decline any such honour. If he should prove to be very nearly allied—if not directly descended from a noble family through his grandmother—perhaps, at a future period, a peerage may be accepted, not sought."

"Oh!" said Sir Charles, "this, perhaps, will suit his patrons better. But I must see Lord L—— before you see Lord C——, and stop proceedings, for I think the patent has

been ordered. You will, perhaps, call on me about one?"

"Very good, Sir Charles; any honours now might trouble me."

When he was gone my uncle said—"How fortunate I happened to be here. You are a baronet whenever you choose to take up the title. My brother refused to do so. But if you move in this affair before your affair with Ellen is settled, I fear it would derange her. Promise me, therefore, to keep this quiet until you are married to her, or that affair is settled."

"Certainly," I said, "that is my determination, you must keep Sir Charles quiet. I do not think we should have let him escape so soon."

"Pooh, pooh, he reveals no secrets, and the persons to whom he will communicate it, by your implied permission, are quite as close as himself. As the Chinaman said—'Would walk over a basket of eggs without breaking one.' But does Noble take Charlotte?—surely no!"

"That will depend on my interview."

"No, Horatio, cut that thread without hesitation. Who can watch Ellen? to whom can she speak unreservedly but to Charlotte? she is your other self, leave me that consolation behind. No, no, I will ask Lord C—— to forbid it."

"My dear uncle, Noble seems to be of your opinion. He asked permission, joking it is true, to take leave of his wife, and Naples is beyond the contemplated trip."

"Take my advice—cut the thread before it gets entangled. If she tells Ellen she is going, all will be confusion."

She put her head in, looking very inquiringly for her husband.

"Charlotte!" exclaimed my uncle, "come here, I have a word for you, this is a secret expedition, I imagine, and no ladies in the train. You must make up your mind to take care of Ellen and myself; I hope you have not said one word to Ellen upon this matter?"

"No, and I should prefer staying at home.

I could not bear to leave the children, and they could not go now."

"Now send your truant husband here," and she tripped off.

"Noble, we have decided that no ladies can go. It is time that you went from home for a short cruize. Presently you will be wanted afloat, and then parting will be considered as a great hardship."

"I have no intention of taking Charlotte, and she is not inclined to go, so that business is settled. Now I think we should be moving towards Charing Cross. Let us take the Constitution range and enter the park end of George Street."

Out we sailed—reached Sir Charles just as he was entering his house—taking me aside, he said, "keep every word that has passed to-day secret." We made our bow to his family, and I then accompanied him to Downing Street, leaving Noble until my return, or until sent for.

Lord C—— received me very kindly, and observed,

"Sir Charles has let you fully into the proposed journey. Are you at liberty, and have you any confidential friend who would act with you, and for you should any accident occur, for no one is safe from the brigands. It is a service of some danger, and your uncle's friends may be recognized even in such company. You have no female ties, of course?"

"I am perfectly free, my lord—no baggage. My friend and brother-in-law Captain Noble will stand by me."

"Oh! I have heard of this Noble, he is a relative of yours Sir Charles?"—he bowed. "Can we see him?"

"Certainly, my lord, he is in attendance at my house." Passing the writing materials to Sir Charles, he, without further notice, wrote —rung the bell, and laid the note before his lordship, as mechanically as if he had been a secretary.

The bell was answered, his lordship handed the note to the messenger, and "quick," was hardly expressed before the door closed without sound.

"Well, Captain Howard, all you will have to do will be to use speed and discretion,—enjoy yourself, but keep your eyes and ears open. You must not commit anything to paper, unless in hieroglyphics, or sent by Captain Noble; and the tone of your conversation you will take from the minister at the court. This requires nothing more than letters from this department, introducing you as a person to whom we wish every attention paid—some letters in cypher may be annexed. Now come and see Lord L——, learn his wishes if he has any, and Captain Noble will be here by that time."

Lord L—— was soft, short, complimentary, and wished me every success. "Keep a whole skin, and when you return, if we are here, I shall be happy to see you—and hear you talk —I hope to some purpose," looking at Lord C——, shaking hands, and bowing us out.

Noble was in attendance—introduced— and asked if he was prepared, ready to defend

himself from banditti, and if he would finish the work should I be placed *hors de combat.*

"I like your countenance, and your relationship to our young friend—and feel confident you will not disappoint our expectations. I shall expect to see you, also, on your return.

"And now, Captain Howard, this day week, by the night mail, or by your own carriage, you will be prepared to start for Paris. No communication with this office until you reach Paris. Sir Charles will kindly take charge of you letters, passports, &c., for we do not wish you to go *as on service.*"

"I perfectly understand, my lord; but I have a questlon to ask,"—he looked dark—"Am I to ask leave from the Admiralty to take this tour 'on leave," or how would you prefer it done?"

"That, sir, is a very judicious thought—I will let you know." We shook hands cordially, and parted.

We had hardly cleared the passage, when Noble said—

"I say, young fellow, you just cleared a squall; you had better have left that for Sir Charles to do. Statesmen do not like to meet with more forethought than they command—use it but quietly."

"Come, come, Master Noble; I see the air of Downing Street does wonders; you will become a 'mat' by-and-bye."

"Well, if I should, it would be only for one *delicate* foot."

CHAPTER XX.

TIME soon flew. My travelling equipage was prepared, Carlos and Noble's servant well armed, and we were prepared for common resistance. Credit, and letters to useful families, were all to be ready at my house at four p.m. on that day week.

Now for the country. Captain Lofty and the rector joined us, glad to get home to their wives, and we lost no time. His cottage *orné* was a sweet little palace; shrubberies thriving; and elegance had been created from something below indifferent. The fruit promised well; we had early strawberries at dinner—a basket prepared to take home—and other delicacies. The rectory was greatly improved—school in

skeleton—many of the new houses inhabited, and everything going on cheerfully. We examined Mr. Gore's—the plantations now in young leaf—lawns bright—in fact, in spring garb; all the establishment in excellent order, and the improvement at the house almost doubling its ostensible value. Mr. Decimus Leo was present, and I authorized him to complete the water-works, which I wished to be followed out in every possible useful manner, and to be made ornamental, if Captain Lofty would approve — and that capacious reservoirs constructed on the leads of the house, should afford plenty of water to every portion of the house, and baths on every floor, which I would send from Italy.

"Italy!" exclaimed Leo. "Cannot you take me? How I should like to be your companion! But those days are past. I must stay here. But, as you talk of purchasing, my advice will be more useful than you imagine. Do you call at Rome? Of course, you must, and Leghorn. Ship your goods then from

Leghorn. Well, I shall call on you before you leave London. Let me know the latest."

"I think I may leave, if Noble is ready, in five days."

"That will do. I will write down for you, in the meantime, a few of the precautions which should be observed by English purchasers of Italian goods."

I would fain dilate on the improvements wrought by Decimus Leo on every portion of my estates, but I fear to weary the reader's patience.

Already had the trout from the lower heavy streams found their way up to the ornamental water at Captain Lofty's cottage; but they had, apparently from the pure supply and greater volume of water, exhibited themselves perceptibly on the surface — a fact before rarely witnessed. Noble seemed to exult in this, and, looking sideways at Captain Lofty, said—"Well, sir, I hope we may have leave to fish when we return."

"You ever will be a boy, Noble; but I am

glad you have a master now—eh! Does that shot tell?"

"I serve, sir, from affection, not authority;" and he waited for another shot—but no reply.

On we went to Noble's, ordered his things to be packed and ready to be picked up in the morning—slept at the Rectory, kissed the babies to please our mamma, and off next morning—reaching London late.

Our day of departure arrived, carriages packed—all ready—Sir Charles gave me a small blue morocco case and two keys, shook us both by the hand, and escaped. My uncle led me to the *boudoir*; there, more like a corpse, was Ellen.

"I am too weak to move, Horatio. I fear I shall not live to see you again; but you will write. This vow I make, Horatio, if I never should overcome my feelings—I never marry any one else, and therefore I will give you one of my old parting embraces.—God bless you, spare me, good bye."

I left that chamber as if I had lost all on

earth. If she died, would I marry? That I would not, for my family could not answer. But I considered the matter in my mind from this moment settled, unless absolutely rejected by Ellen, I would not marry for years. My uncle led me down, put his packet in my hand, and said—"Write, Horatio, write constantly." Decimus Leo rushed in, "Not too late I hope," and another small note was slipped into my hand. "Read that at your leisure—the police will not think worse of me than they did, and my writing, if you fall among banditti, may befriend you. I have tasted of every man's cup in Italy. I am safe, and may we see you safe back."

Off we drove—my uncle waving his hand, and Charlotte taking a last peep at the drawing-room window. A pair took us to the 'Elephant and Castle,' where fresh leaders hooked on, and we moved along more agreeably.

That was my heaviest journey out of London — a day never to be effaced from the

tablets of my memory. Shooters'-hill brought to our recollection highwaymen, and to divert my attention, Noble, in joke, exclaimed, "That is a suspicious looking fellow; look to your pistols. Are they loaded? mine are."

So I loaded mine; then I thought there was something strange, and putting my head out, I said to Noble's servant, "Are you loaded? keep your eyes open, these are not safe times."

"Oh, sir, it is only the horse patrol — I know him, sir;" and he called him by his name.

"All right," he said, "you must not speak to me. I am ordered to watch this carriage; and be on your guard, there are some devils out on this road to-night. If the post-boys stop shoot them first—they are always concerned. I have my eye on them." This he said so that they might hear him.—Smack went the whips, on we went, and in a few minutes a ball flew in at one window and out at the other.

"Capital!" said Noble; "keep back, they calculate on your stooping forward to see."

Another passed; the patrol drew his pistols —sung out to the servants to "fire at the next flash," and riding up to the leading postilion, "If you flag one instant I blow your brains out—I am the patrol, I know your plot. You hear me too, do you not?" addressing the second.

"Oh, yes," he sulkily replied, "we know you well enough."

Crack went the whip, and off we went. Both post-boys were arrested as we changed horses, and the fresh postilions, who were apprised of our intention by the postmaster to shoot them first, made good speed, got their fees, and by this means our voyage to Dover occupied very little time. Certainly no delays. The landlord of the inn put a letter before me, stating that it came from authority. It was a warning against the mischief at Shooter'-hill; —rather the wrong end of the road—and referred to the plans of my uncle's associates.

Was I never to be safe from these wretches? Italy, doubtless, would swarm. At Paris I proposed to change my name—of course, by the minister's advice.

Crossing the water, and travelling to Paris, amuses no one; it did not cause me to commit the troubles to paper; the difficulty I had to contend with was my letters: these must be searched, "unless for the minister." "Then they are for the minister; and as far as he pleases, can be communicated to the head of the police," and I showed the talismanic blue box. Slam went the door, a mounted officer rode beside us, and I drove to the minister's hotel, placing before him the blue box and papers. Seeing the officer waiting, he said—"Make my respects to the prefect—all right;" and he withdrew. Recollecting himself, and seeing no letter for him, he said—"I think I understand—you must be Captain Howard. Surely, you have a letter for me?"

"That I will see presently; but I was compelled to come here suddenly. I left London

in haste ; I have not yet opened that case, and I was desired to keep myself as a private individual until I reached Paris. I did not receive these until I was stepping into my carriage." I opened the case, and the upper letters were for him. He read them steadily, and said—"You have had a narrow escape ; had these fallen into the hands of the police, your journey might have been back to London I see you have the character for discretion, decision, &c.—you are my guest, and must pass for one of my household."—I told him of the affair on the road, and the letter suggesting that, for the interest of my mission, I had better assume a travelling name. "Quick, then, before any one interrupts us. 'Moreton'—my friend ; 'Hy. Dyer'—my own—"

"Very good. Now let me introduce you."

And taking me into another room, I became Mr. H. Dyer, and Noble, H. Moreton.

"We will rejoin you at dinner," addressing the ladies ; "these are our guests—let apart-

ments be prepared—they cannot quit this during their stay in Paris."

Returning to his room.—"Now, what are your plans?—for I must see the minister of the interior—get additional passports—in fact learn from him who your assassins were in England; he knows every feature of your life, I am certain—for he has more than once mentioned the circumstances which have so strangely mixed up your private affairs with those of the government.

"Well, he must now advise us, therefore we will call on him without delay; I will send to apprize him of our intended visit, and you can wash the dust off you before the carriage is ready. Everything here is done with court exactness, but do not dress—you are privileged travellers."

We were shown to our rooms—connecting—shifted to decent walking-dress—secured the letters in our strong box, and rejoined the minister. Stepping into his carriage, we were soon in the presence of the French minister,

who measured me very accurately, and speaking to his secretary, he replied—

"Oh! yes, I have had the pleasure of seeing the gentlemen frequently in London, but not of becoming acquainted."

The minister addressing me, said—

"You may speak without reserve here on the subject of your uncle's proceedings, as we are perfectly *au fait* with the whole transaction, and can aid you."

Lord G—— mentioned the attack, the minister bowed, but said—

"Surely you received timely warning?"

"None, but by chance from the patrol, and a letter at Dover."

He appeared astonished, and turning to the secretary he immediately said—

"One week since the information went to the police-station, that one of the factious had passed over. But we will intercept him unless he passes by the Holland route. You must change your name, and I would advise you to disguise your servants. When you

pass the spots likely to be infested by brigands, ride outside, take their places. You cannot resist that party if they should stumble on you.

"I can give you a French courier—a fine fellow—leave your English man here, he can do no good. His appearance in Paris, and his refusal to tell where his master is, will throw them off the scent."

"Millord, can you trust to me?"

We bowed and withdrew.

"That is settled; you are now in good hands, safer than in mine. Another strong ground is, that your French courier, if he has instructions, will shoot his man first, and show his instructions afterwards. No one will question him. And now let me assure you that it is not every Englishman that falls so well on his feet as you have done at Paris. Your game now is safe. I must throw you overboard as in any way officially connected. You are my private guest, the moment you are introduced at court. Of course you both

have been in court in England?" (We bowed.) "You must move on to Brussels, thence to Vienna, Venice, Milan, Genoa, Leghorn, Rome, Naples. I do not prescribe your route, but that, I imagine, will afford you occupation, and so long as your motions are rapid and varied, by so much the safer you will be. At Naples I think you are safe. If you are not required to return by land, go home by sea. The patronage which sends you here, will learn from me the necessity of this step, as your papers on your return might not be quite so safe, even among friends. Doubtless your high notions teach you to despise danger, but, my good friends, prudence is better than unnecessary courage."

"The army of occupation left us many examples. Did you know poor Pellew, Israel's son?"

"I did, my lord, and dined in his company, the last time on the 27th of August, 1817—a fine handsome fellow. Little Gronow, too, I knew; he was a complete soldier's child, cradled in a drum, they used to say."

"Born under a gun, some of ours were, I happen to know—Neptune, to wit."

We passed a most agreeable evening, visited the opera, and had a most animated discussion after the ladies retired, leaving at three.

"Well, here at Paris, your last letters must be written—I will guarantee their safety; but send nothing you care about being read after leaving Brussels. Direct all your letters to the last minister you leave, he will send them, eventually they will reach me and your friend, Sir Charles. You see I know your secrets already, will forward them to their destination; but inform them from hence of your new names, so as to mislead everyone; take common names for your English names, Miss Thomas, Mrs. Harris, Mr. P. Johns, they care not to open such letters, and never if well written,—they detest mercantile hands. The day after to-morrow, I think you will pass the court, as civilians. This is understood, the court will know you, and your reasons you

must leave the minister to explain—that is his business."

That was over; our new French valet, courier, and *English interpreter* in one, was shipped; special orders left with Noble's servant, who strutted with great importance at his trust, and off we rolled for Brussels, leaving a packet of heavy letters behind for home, from which we now began to feel that we were departing. The absence of Noble's servant now brought out Carlos's abilities, he was everything, down to cook,—even then in his glory, fancying that he was acting a part. Our French courier was a trump, and on reaching Brussels, we found him too well known to explain anything; he seemed to command, exhibited his passport –a bow—no search, no trouble; and our hotel was quite to our taste. I was too anxious to get forward to Vienna, and our stay here did not exceed forty-eight hours. Legrand, for that was the name he gave us, said on the second day, "Monsieur was right in quitting Brussels. I espied one of the factious

there—he was awfully frightened—I followed him and gave him in charge on a fictitious offence. He is safe in Paris by this time, and possibly confessed to something he has done, or been detained on some new charge; they have them all ready cut and dried for the factious, it never answers to let them go when they are once taken, until no one appears to accuse or substantiate them, then they are placed beyond the limits of France; and it is hinted, that their return will entail something beyond a short imprisonment. I do not think you could stand this in your country, sir?"

"No! the people would be in commotion, if any man were illegally arrested, even if he were a swindler."

CHAPTER XXI.

VENICE had no charms for me. I saw—was pleased—and was anxious to be off before I entered it, I may almost add. Our reception, and the enjoyment of the society I was in was, perhaps, all that drew me out of my own thoughts. Men should not travel with their eyes half-open; sleepy views do not afford matter for relation. I saw no bravos—have no intrigues to relate—and returned to Vienna in less time than I was expected. It was still inconvenient, to me particularly, to be introduced at court. I was becoming very anxious to see a live bandit, and to sup with the chief I would have given a good sum, provided I

got well out of his fangs. I left Vienna, as I leave kind friends; I had seen people there who had interested me, and where one feels himself under obligations, a deep interest always results. I hoped to meet them again in England.

Milan did not detain me longer than mere forms, and the transmission of letters home required. But I had not yet received any. Genoa I disliked on my former visit; but Leghorn—there I was interested, and there I remained an entire week, happier than I had been since I left England. From hence my letters would safely reach England by sea, and I wrote volumes to unburthen my soul. I felt lighter; and now, if the brigands robbed me, they had little to take. The merry little souls gave us charms, to protect us from these dreaded characters — ball proof, too, and as they averred against any evil eyes but theirs. As to Noble, I was compelled to threaten to expose him to Charlotte, to tell the wicked little fairies that he was a papa, and that they

ought to be ashamed of themselves; but the more I rated, the more they clung round him—such is the obstinacy of the sex—like musquitoes around a candle, until their wings are scorched, and they encrust the wick—flutter—buz—buz. He was a blue light, or black light.

I was glad to escape from too much gaiety—it has its moments of depression, also—and we quitted Leghorn and its cheerful families, to encounter our fate on this or the other side of Civita Vecchia. Twice we rode outside, but no adventures. Once we slept at a very suspicious inn, and heard strong contention, and, I thought, the voice of Legrand; but he was heard, a few moments after, with Carlos, close to my bedside in the next room, enquiring what all that clatter could mean. I thought, or I dreamed, that I heard, "Well, we shall be at —— to-night; tell him I will meet him there." This could not refer to us. Any access to our room was through that of Legrand's. They were well

armed. Noble and myself were quite alive, and any encounter would produce, in all probability, 4 dead men × 2, if they were successful. In these cases, I believe they know, as well as we do, what they have to expect; and great daring, in such cases, does not characterize their proceedings. It is not for death and glory they dare, but for plunder, and that they must *live* to *carry off*.

We dropped into a sound sleep, and so long had we overslept our mark, that Legrand was impatient, and Carlos said—"The omelette would be good for nothing at all." However, sailors know how to dress and undress, and to their astonishment we were calling loudly for breakfast, when they believed us still in bed.

Onward we went. Much short of our day's journey, Legrand said he disliked the last place very much. "Here was a respectable inn," shrugging his shoulders, "for this country, and here he would answer for our safety; whereas the vile place in advance was the resort of the lowest banditti." Well, we could

not oppose, and, stopping, asked for accommodation. An unexpected refusal of the apartments rather puzzled us: they were occupied by a person of consequence. This seemed very much to disconcert Legrand. He went in, saw the landlord, and after considerable gesticular motions of the arms, it was conceded that if we would remain completely *perdue*, and allow the carriage to be concealed, that we should be accommodated; that the party would not arrive until late in the evening, and would quit before dawn.

It instantly flashed on me that this was the enemy, and I hinted as much to Legrand. He said he was sure it was; to proceed would throw us into the hands of brutes; and here we might obtain a passport up to Naples. It was a game worth playing; so we took our dinner in obscurity, and awaited the result. Supper or no supper, Legrand remained on the look-out. About nine, a travelling-carriage drove up, two Italians of rank, apparently, got out, several gentlemen on horse-

back, and the customary armed escort. All was quiet. At length the bustle of supper was going forward, and we began to fancy that we were to go to bed supperless; but a gentleman entered the room, and uttered ten thousand apologies that the innkeeper should have been so uncourteous, as our servant had informed him, and the only mode by which I could satisfy him was by partaking of their supper, and taking better rooms, as they had business which did not brook of delay, and if the moon had been up, they would not have slept at all. I had some such idea also, but instantly accepted the invitation, and we enjoyed ourselves amazingly. I was not cautious in appearance, and sustained my character, still I could plainly perceive that his companions were far removed from gentlemen. We retired early, and at parting, as he shook me by the hand, as well as Noble, he said—"As I am going on through Civita Vecchia, I shall order rooms for you, as I have done for myself—we shall meet at Rome

probably." We slept soundly—walls have ears, and until we were well on the road, I was silent.

"Well, Legrand, am I right?" He frowned, and changed the subject to the inn in advance, —and now very close—and pointed out how much better we had fared, and the fleas would have made very *deep bites*, had we slept there. So I thought, from the looks of some trooper-looking fellows at the door, where their horses were saddled, but who seemed to have some decided aversion to Legrand. More of these we noticed, generally in fours; but they saluted us in passing, so I imagined them to be part of the country force. Our friend Legrand was also prepared, and told us not to trust these men; and that four balls from us, and two from the rifles behind, were important arguments against any four. If twelve appear, hide your arms—you cannot kill them. They will take to the wood, if you oppose, and pick you off, quietly shooting the horses, perhaps, in the first instance."

It is needless to add that we passed many, unmolested, found our rooms and supper prepared that night, and reached Civita Vecchia safely; nor did anything occur to disturb us on this side of Rome, where we took up our abode at a house selected by our courier. There our travelling friend called, supped with us, and wished to play cards; but Legrand gave him to understand that we were very austere—religious—and would gladly pay any money rather than win. This seemed not to suit his purpose, and he retired. Legrand now observed—"You must be aware who your visitor is, and the only mode you have of repaying him for convoy, is by depositing here a sum for his use, for which you will give him a cheque at your taking leave of him, near Naples; for there he intends finally to give you a take-leave supper, and thank you for your confidence.

All this was verified; the sum was deposited with the landlord, who was his ally—he knew Leo's writing, and at parting, said—"If

you travel back, do not leave this until your passports are secured." We now moved on for Naples, taking a look at Castaglioni, &c., and reached Naples in safety. Here I found letters.

I was once more at home, and it mattered little to me what flags or pendants came into the bay; so far as my position was concerned, I was simply a private gentleman—Captain Howard, and his friend, Captain Moreton Noble. English society had much increased, and, but for the circumstances of ministerial and court influence, I should have been housed in anything but a palace. Noble evidently enjoyed himself, and our former rambles towards Vesuvius were to be repeated.

Of my letters I will merely observe, that they gave better accounts of Ellen; she could move about her room, and was becoming more cheerful; still, the letters must have followed us so closely that they were not more than two months later than our departure. Excepting my mother, all were flourishing. She

had lapsed into a fit of despondency, resulting from the revelation of that packet, and was fast falling into almost imbecility, precisely similar to that which followed the decease of my father. It was imagined that this would disappear if I married Ellen. But the contrary I knew to be her feeling. Of Ellen she had ever been unnaturally jealous; she had exposed her brother!—that, bad as he was, was a crime — detested as he was by my mother—never to be forgiven. This was the ostensible reason given.

In all expeditions, gaiety, &c., Noble now took the active part; and many were our excursions from Gæta, northerly, including every portion of Puzzaoli Bay, round to Vesuvius, Ischia, and by land, as well as by sea. With the opera, good society, and such a climate, who could fail to enjoy himself? The arrival of one of our scouts enabled us, in a demi-official capacity, to visit Messina, Palermo, and Malta, where later letters awaited me, and instructions 'to remain at

Naples until a vessel called to convey us to England.'

This afforded us a return passage to Naples in the same vessel. All progressing satisfactorily at home.

At Genoa, Leghorn, and Rome, I had profited by the notes of Decimus Leo—buying nothing fragile, but what could be taken under my own care, or that of a servant, and ordering everything to await orders at Leghorn, where I knew that every care wonld be taken of any valuables.

As I now considered my return by sea to be certain, and I had imbibed that absurd habit of amassing—I will not call it collecting—objects, I visited the best establishments about Naples; but, instead of purchasing ponderous works, containing bits of lava, marbles, &c., in the form of tables, one of the notes of Leo advised to 'purchase cases of the small slabs, and have them finished in England.' These consisted of marbles, lavas, agates, jaspers, &c.

The coral workers were visited, and much money wasted. One tree, shown as invaluable, was a miserable imperfection, not to be compared to the worst of the three I had *pirated*. This still continued to trouble me.

Many additions to valuable relics from Pompeii, presented by court favourites, enriched the stock, which might at some future date form some pet cabinet.

CHAPTER XXII.

In the midst of these subjects diverting my attention, letters arrived with the broad emblem of mourning. The truth flashed out before the seals were broken. One look from Noble, before I had opened the letter, brought from me—"Well, we expected it." He, entirely mistaking my meaning, exclaimed—"Not at all!"

Until now I hardly knew my feelings; now they tumultuously rolled, and I could not read, until Noble said—"Your mother." I was almost insensible. To him I had not revealed her condition; it was only noticed by the

Rector, and when excited by the visits of Charlotte or Fanny, was not distinguishable.

I then read my letter; it was from my uncle, describing the quiet decline of my mother, until she was cold and stiff, apparently asleep near the fire, where they had been reading the evening Sabbath sermon, and not noticed until they were preparing to retire. So easy was her last end.

Ellen had never quitted London, and Charlotte, who was her constant companion, only left her to run down on Saturday night to visit her mother, and return on the Monday. The shock to Ellen was great. Her letter was all tenderness and anxiety, that I might not be reached by the hand of an assassin—but no more, not one word about my mother.

A letter from Charlotte revealed more. It seemed to cause a great change in her feelings, to remove a barrier between us, and that if I was not insensible to her value, she thought the matter would depend very much upon my conduct.

I have revealed enough to evince how dear that life had now become to me; it was a hidden fire implanted in boyhood, it had smouldered like phosphorus in water, because the temperature had been kept down by a degree not exceeding maternity. Now it had been brought to light, exposed to the supporting gas of vitality, and threatened to blaze out with alarming brilliancy, which might even cause the beloved object to recoil. Such is human nature. Such results from controlling nature's best gifts.

Noble could not comprehend me. Nor could Decimus Leo, had he been present, have read my feelings. I was incomprehensible, as Noble truly said. He could not make out whether the death of a mother had produced joy or grief; but he knew not how two griefs in anticipation may affect a man, insensible as he may have imagined me to be. His wife had revealed nothing to him but matters concerning his own family. My affairs were sacred.

I became anxious, fidgetty, and rushed everywhere to kill time, until my recal came, for desert my post I would not. I felt assured also that this would be in some measure retarded or advanced by my politic friend, Sir Charles Harrison, who would take his cue from my uncle.

Noble was anxious too. I suppose he had secrets of his own. He was not in any way anxious to return by land.

We had made a party of three families, to enjoy the fresh air at Castiglione, on the Bay of Gaeta; and a boat, by sea, carried all our extras, so that the wines should not be injured. An Austrian officer, who had been employed at that siege, took us to their advanced lines—pointed out a spot where his colonel had fallen, struck by a 24-pound shot on the shoulder. We then visited the convent on the hill, well marked by shot and shell, and below, in a hollow, the place of encampment. We strolled about, Noble and myself, until we found ourselves in the midst of a

wild set of young fellows, lying about, playing at cards, laughing and joking immoderately.

"Well, Noble," I observed, "come, there is rural enjoyment! Are they not happy?"

"Well," he said, in his dry manner, "perhaps they are; but I do not quite like their looks, and we are alone."

At that moment, a well-dressed peasant checked them, and, advancing, invited us to take a glass of iced lemonade. I instantly recognized the bandit chief, as he did me, and followed him—Noble mechanically doing the same.

"We are safe here," he said. "We have unfortunately come, I fear, to disturb your enjoyment; but fear not, leave it all to me. We'll have a game at cards at Naples."

I bowed.

"Well, have you any fears about supping with us to-night? To know my *friends* may serve some good purpose."

"The hour?"

"Nine."

"I shall be there—the excuse yours."

"Oh, you have been useful, to-day, when I lost my way!"

He bowed. He conducted us to the suburb road near the sea, where we soon overtook our friends, who were alarmed at our absence, and examined us to satisfy themselves we had not been in bad company.

Our party was not disturbed. Our friend came, was quite at home, spoke French fluently, and understood English perfectly, but would not reply in that language. The courier recognized him with considerable alarm, but all went off well—our arms were at hand—and some stories told of brigands by the Austrian at this very villa. He then enquired who my friend was. I said—

"Some gentleman of the neighbourhood, who kindly extricated us from a knot of idle gamblers, gave us iced lemonade, and conducted us to the beach."

"Too gentlemanly by half," he said. "He is no Italian; I think he is German, and

his features are remarkably familiar. I once thought he might be an absent brother."

As he said this rather solemnly, the resemblance struck me, as well as Noble. We knew nothing of our Austrian guest. He might, indeed, be a brother—nothing more likely—and no Austrian officer, excepting having served here under General Nugent, as he asserted. At all events, under the care of brothers I thought we might sleep securely; but the order of our rooms had been changed by Legrand, all precautions taken for defence, and the bandit chief wished to see me in private. He was admitted by a side door; he was armed complete.

"Be not alarmed! It suits my purpose well. That Austrian officer is not one of your friends?"

"No! I know him not."

"I must take him to appease my adherents, and he is one of the factious. If he be not taken, blood will flow before the morning. It will be much more convenient to take him

home and teach him manners. I am a renegade of his family. He is no brother of mine, unless he be a greater sinner."

I bowed, thanked him, and said—"We appear to be in the hands of two parties. If attacked, I suppose many will fall, for we are well armed and prepared. But I have full confidence in seeing you safe at Naples."

"That shall be." And he was off.

"So much for your estimate of rural enjoyment," exclaimed Noble.

"But, my good sir, if I had not treated it as such, and accepted the invitation, what kind of enjoyment would we derive to-night?"

"Right, Howard, you have a sharp eye, and presence of mind, to make the most of a difficulty; you are like a cat, always tumble on your legs, when another would break his bones. You will get rid of your Austrian friend this time without legal assistance, but I suppose the law expenses will be paid."

"Provided his life is safe—as far as my influence extends."

"That, Howard, is one of your weak points. You would snatch a dagger out of an assassin's left hand, and put it in his right, that he might perform his work more effectually. I hope the rascals will deal summarily with the rascal."

Legrand now informed us that we must be on the alert. "A troop of cavalry had passed through, and left a note for the Austrian officer; they would call for an answer. Your friend will have him before they return. Promise not to leave your room, or you may be shot. I have warned all the other gentlemen, and the ladies are safe. We must start by boat early, and leave the rest to fate." He retired.

Before half an hour elapsed, the tramp of horses was heard; the Austrian walked out to meet them—was pinioned—mounted against his will, and rode off. Two hours later, fighting was going on not far distant, carbine and pistol shots were heard, but soon subsided.

We returned safely to Naples. My law ex-

penses were paid. The Austrian was dead, several of his followers killed, and all those captured delivered to the authorities, who, I understood, paid a certain sum for them. "The factious are coming in," he observed; "they must pass through our fraternity, but until you are safely at sea, none will pass into Naples. If I should visit England, I hope to see you, I may then be an honest man. I am not vicious now. Tyranny has made the bandit chief." He withdrew, refusing further recompense, merely remarking, "My price does not vary with the purse; I serve as the Swiss do, for pay and honour."

Now, what were this man's ideas of honour? 'Honour among thieves,' is a trite expression. But what bandit honour is, we have yet to learn.

Legrand now informed me that our escape was miraculous—nothing but the presence of this generous chief had saved us. He had tracked this Austrian from Rome, hung on him here, detected his entire schemes, and laid

his plans so well, that he had destroyed one of the most brutal gangs, collected for this special occasion, that infested (by pairs) the environs of Naples.

"But as you value our lives, be silent. We were all doomed to be butchered—some spark may yet blaze; this is no safe place." In this I concurred.

The tales of banditti, the Austrian, and the unknown, were suppressed by the wish of the minister. 'He guessed,' as the Yankees say, 'pretty considerably near the fact.' I have some reason to believe that these bandit chiefs are frequently received and paid by the chief of the police, for service rendered to the state.

Early one morning I was awakened by Carlos informing me that a large ship was coming in, and that they thought it might be the admiral. It turned out to be the squadron, and before four that afternoon they had crawled into the bay. I had many friends of every grade there, and had the gratification of

seeing them all at our palace. Noble, I believe, knew every one in the fleet, and during our short stay we had a pleasant round of amusement. Poor Haskins had died! My letters were satisfactory, and (officially) homeward bound the moment the admiral could spare a vessel—and that was at this moment, "awaiting only the despatches of the minister to be confided to me." This caused some little jealousy, and I was on the point of refusing to take a passage, when fortunately another vessel arriving, took her place, and although no positive orders were given, I was "to be treated as an envoy, to be conveyed to any ports I intimated my wish, by notice in writing, to call at." And should unforeseen obstacles occur, I was provided with a sealed letter which I could open and present. I had secret instructions from the minister, so that my anomalous position could be rendered official whenever the public service demanded.

Leghorn was our first port, there I embarked valuables; but my kind friend the captain, a

perfect gentleman, said he was very light and wanted ballast, so we remained to have one or two pleasant days and trim ship. Genoa and Marseilles followed, the latter in order to land Legrand, who thought he would be better received by passing through France and picking up information—more, probably, than he could expect to derive from me.

Poor fellow! he was very sorry to part—expressed himself in very energetic language, and hoped, if ever I travelled again, I would ask for him. He would not receive one farthing beyond his stipulated wages—but, as I might replace my pistols in England, they would be treasured. The rifle I persuaded him to take also, and to call on me if any duty brought him to England.

"And the chief too, sir? not a bad friend.'

"Yes, I should like to see him, too, there he would be safe; *many worse are,* and treated as heroes."

I had some idea of landing at Malaga, and going through Spain and France, but a heavy

levanter came on, and we found refuge in Gibraltar, where I passed a few pleasant days with an old respected officer, and where I had met with every kindness in 1815. England was now our direct port, but the arrival of a vessel with despatches, delayed us a few more days, and Cadiz and Lisbon, for some unknown purpose, were to be visited.

We beat through the Strait, merely, I imagine, to say that it had been done; nothing but good seamanship and pilotage, with a craft that can be well handled, can effect it (as it should be done). But is it worth the labour of twenty-four hours' incessant harassing toil to captain and crew, when a few days would assuredly bring a fair wind? Hardly had we rounded into Tarifa Bay, than it fell calm; an easterly wind sprung up, and although the vessels in the offing carried a spanking breeze, we crawled slowly along shore and reached Cadiz. Here our worthy consul received us with his noted hospitality; our eyes and ears were open, we saw a little more of Spanish

society, and Noble had an opportunity of screwing up his mouth to complimentary Spanish phrases. But we had none of the wild, joyous gladness of heart of Havanna; no, here all was formal, and within the limits of precise courtesy.

How do they manage to lose all this on crossing the Atlantic? Does salt water effect the cure?—for an evil it is in reality. No one deems them an ounce more virtuous for prudery.

Our excellent captain and officers were delighted at the opportunities that afforded, and I was myself sorry that I must keep up appearances by not staying longer than our affairs warranted.

Lisbon did not interest me, nor its people; there was too much coldness and *hauteur* and ceremony before you made an acquaintance, and by that moment you are compelled to say 'adieu.' My reception and entertainment was as warm as I could wish at our minister's, but the machinery of Portuguese diplomacy is tedious beyond measure. If I had to deal

with them in war matters, I would send a 32-pound shot to accompany every despatch. It is wonderful what an efficacious sharpener of the wits it is ; and it cuts very short disputed meanings of words. It is one of the best pronouncing dictionaries both in Spain, Spanish America, Portugal, and Italy, that can be referred to.

"Pray, sir, what terms do you propose?"

"Look here, my good fellow : there is my barge and the boats of the squadron with guns, &c.

"Here are fourteen long arguments on this cabin deck. On deck others with larger mouths. We push off directly, and shall, probably, salute that flag, *if flying on the batteries*, about the moment you land." (A very low bow.)

No salute took place until the British colours were saluted. This is genuine diplomacy!

Poor Noble could not get on with Portuguese at all. He considered it like dashing a

wet swab into his mouth, and spoiling good Spanish.

Letters arrived, detaining us twenty-four hours, and we passed out of the Tagus, threatening the fishing-boats with infinity of scraps of sail, from the huge lateen to a dirty frock or pocket-handkerchief, if they use them.

My letters were still doubtful—no sunshine! But what could I expect? I had been told that all depended on myself, and that great caution was necessary.

CHAPTER XXIII.

We reached Portsmouth on the 15th of April, 1820, meeting, very unexpectedly at the stairs, my old friend 'Sampson,' and his pretty little wife—the former just returned from Africa, a fish out of water—one of Sir E. O.'s birds. He accompanied me to the admiral, despatching his wife home, thoroughly believing, I fear, that we were coming to dine with him. I had nothing to do but to order horses, —a carriage was waiting for me; and, taking leave of my kind friend, and warm-hearted

soul, off we flew to town, sleeping at Guildford.

We reached London, and found Sir Charles Harrison at home, before noon; rejoiced to see us, and, leaving us with his family, he repaired to Downing Street. "Lord C—— would not be in town until four, when he would apprize me."

From Sir Charles I could learn nothing. He knew nothing, but he would precede, and prevent confusion. "Ellen is quite well; you will not recognize her—younger, more erect, and a much finer figure—but no animation. It is painful to be with her. You must be very cautious—but Charlotte will see you first. Oh, Noble!—excuse me—another noble boy!" and he grasped his hand. "They talk of calling him Horatio!"

Sir Charles drove off—we followed, stopping at the Admiralty to report, "Returned from leave," officially, by letter, which we handed in from the carriage, and Grosvenor Square soon was sighted. Allowing time for

the carriage of Sir Charles to draw ahead, we crawled up to the door without much noise, and the hall-door opening, with the delighted face of old Hardy as the picture in the foreground, soon admitted us to our welcome home.

My uncle awaited us on the ground-floor, and took us into my sanctum. "Here you will remain until summoned. You, Noble, can see Charlotte where she awaits you in the library."

"I am delighted, Horatio, to see you back. You are thinner, care-worn, and more aged. Pray cut away those moustaches—and you have too much hair. Shave, and wash at once—I can sit here and converse. Now, take my advice. Be completely on your guard; observe the most minute points of etiquette, receive all that will be accorded to you; but Ellen has risen from the dead—she is no longer the old woman.—We are surprised; you must be more impressed by it from absence. That you are attached to each

other now, no one doubts; but she is so sensitive, so like a timid fawn, that one hardly knows how to address her. I trust to your discretion."

I had by this time relieved myself of dust and beard, and got my hair, although still very long, into respectable order.

"Well, now you look more christian, and respectable; but much older. That is in your favour at present."

Noble returned to us, and informed me that Charlotte would receive me 'aloft.' So I very soon found myself at the drawing-room, and in her arms—more convulsively glad to see me than she had ever been before. But many too well know what a beloved sister is! How much better she is than any other sister! and how sad it is that brothers are allowed to spoil them! I think I see some wicked eye asking, 'Do they not spoil brothers?' Won't say—not bound to answer any questions which may criminate anybody.

'After a storm comes a calm'—but no face-

hiding this time—the tears she regarded not, they ran unnoticed.

"Now, Horatio for your trial! She will allow no one to be present—she fears it more than you do. Ask nothing—wait patiently the movements of her feelings, give her time, she is, I was going to say, a woman—she is rather more; so unearthly, that like the snuff of a candle she may go out. I dread at times to be alone with her. But you too well know the cause, of all—'woman's love!'" and her own bright eyes flashed fire. She kissed me tenderly—streaming with tears, led me to the door of the sitting room allotted solely to her, and rushed away.

I entered—before me sat a being as unlike Ellen Percy, as could be conceived. I started, and fancied I was mistaken. Her sweet smile and blush brought her days of assumed pride forcibly to my recollection.

"Surely, Horatio, you have not forgotten me; come and sit beside me, and tell me where you have been."

It occurred painfully to my mind, that she was deranged, and that had endowed her with wonderful command of assumed powers, for real I could not believe them. I took my seat, and took her hand, which she seemed to withdraw, still it remained, and I was allowed to retain it.

"Come, Horatio, must I question *you?* I have not the power I had — I mean in strength."

"But the same, and greater influence, Ellen—call it by what name you please."

"I am afraid, Horatio, you are still the child, and have not yet learned to see things in this world in their true colours."

"No, Ellen! you once allowed me some share of sound sense when I was truly a child, I have now arrived at such a pitch, that I can be trusted with the confidence of my country's ministers. I have been absent in France, Austria, and Italy, and have now returned by the blessing of God, if it be His will, to do my duty in society at home, in peace and retire-

ment—but that consummation of all which has distracted me when absent, and distracts me now, depends on ——"

"Your own decision, I suppose, Horatio," interrupting me.

How a few short words perplex a man!

"In the matter, Ellen, to which I refer, man has no decision. He pleads his cause, and the decision is favourable or adverse. If mine should be adverse, I must again seek to drown care in a foreign land—brave the dagger of the bandit, and possibly leave no name behind me."

She became very restless and uneasy, enquiring—"Have you escaped banditti?"

"Am I here?"

"I hardly know, Horatio; you look so unlike your former self."

"Who has made me so? But, Ellen, let us speak less in enigmas, and more in the ordinary course of conversation. I cannot fancy that you have forgotten me—that I set aside. Nor can I forget that I left this country

ostensibly at your request, to afford you time to consider the matter laid before us. That you would think so unworthily of me, as to suppose that my affection could change, I will not believe."

"I may be vain enough, and, if so, must suffer for my sin, to have imagined that, having considered the question in all its bearings, you would have weighed the matter in the balance thus :—

"In this scale I place all my happiness on earth ; in this other, such as I know to be the affection of the suppliant, Horatio Howard."

"Well, the balance is in your favour. But a promise to find another Ellen Percy, placed in this, renders mine infinitely heavier."

"Produce me the other Ellen Percy."

"This, Horatio, is your sense of *justice!* Now, suppose that I produce this other Ellen Percy, would you take her?"

"Yes, provided" (she started) "I see she has my heart reflected, and is, in fact, another self in mind, ability, and thought, and

endowed with the recollections which endeared me to that former one, and that our affections can be as purely interchanged.

"And if I cannot produce her?"

"God's will be done; I shall be miserable."

"Indeed!—and is there no remedy? If this other Ellen Percy—this deity of your imagination, Horatio, is not to be found, could you not find in all the wide world some other consolation?"

"Can you talk to me thus, Ellen, in the language of unkindness. Have you no pity; can you unmoved sit thus before me, and deeply wound a heart, already too much torn by —I am almost afraid to utter the word which might possibly distress yon.—I might have said, assumed coldness. Do you intend first to probe my heart to its depth, leave there a wound, that of uncertainty, and throw me away, as unworthy of your notice. Speak, pronounce my fate, and destroy the life you caressed and brought unsullied to manhood.

"Are you afraid of the work of your hands Does any poison lurk in my veins?" She shuddered.

The idea recurred that she must be deranged, or that her feelings never could have been mastered thus far. Her eyes remained fixed, her beauty fled, her brow contracted, as if struggling with some internal thought which pained her.

I remained silent, watching her intently.

At last I said, "Dear Ellen, do lay your head back on the easy chair and rest; I am sure you must be exhausted."

She did so, still suffering me to retain her hand. At length she said—

"Horatio, it is idle to attempt to explain our feelings, or resist them, but I have now made my mind up. Be composed—If I do not misinterpret your expressions, you come now to ask how I feel disposed to comply with the wish of your grandfather, to become your wife.

"To be a wife according to her vows taken

at the altar, and the dictates of our religion, requires that woman should have no mental reservation, and that she should not commit a blasphemous act, by consenting to become a wife, and seceding at her convenience. Now the matter in question in my conscience is—Am I prepared, do I believe that I am calculated to make you such a wife as contemplated. I fear not. But if you are content to take me with all my imperfections, under the following conditions,—then you may claim the Ellen I cannot find. The conditions are these:—That until you meet me at the altar, to claim that other Ellen, or the one I represent, you treat me as an ordinary member of this family, to whom you may suspect that you are not indifferent. You shall be permitted every facility of conversation, under due restraint.

"And when I am satisfied that a prudent period has elapsed, you may be permitted to inquire the date; but not less than twenty-one days from the present period. That is, four-

teen days hence it may be named." She blushed deeply. "Will that appease the unworthy treatment you complain of? Mind, you are to promise as fairly as I promised, to produce that other Ellen Percy."

"I do. But does kissing this hand pass beyond that liberty?"

"No! But my lips, until I become yours, must remain pure. You must fancy me the bride you would have selected, had not the will placed me before you. Recollect the other Ellen!"

She recovered herself immediately. "Now, Horatio, this painful, but not unpleasant subject has passed, tell me more about yourself—or perhaps we will have our small party of five here this evening; your business until then must require you, and I will not permit you to omit any duty." So I kissed her hand, passed out, kissed Charlotte, making up for lost kisses, and she rushed in. I saw my uncle for a few moments below.

"Well," he said, "I need not ask, I see

that all is satisfactory, I give you joy." And the warm-hearted creature pressed me to him in convulsive ecstacy. I almost feared his heart would burst.

CHAPTER XXIV.

In the course of the evening, my uncle quietly observed—"The remaining papers, Ellen—may I make use of them?—they are important to Horatio—but that he will explain hereafter; indeed, we have not yet read them."

"Oh, yes!—you can do no wrong—you are too kind—only let me never see parchment or papers, or business again,—recollect, my dear sir, I am now free."

"Very good," he said; "and I am to transact all your legal business for you?"

"Yes! you and Mr. Deedes; he had my instructions, years ago;" and she blushed deeply.

Early next morning, my uncle was stirring, and came into my study with the papers, which, he informed me, related to my claims on the baronetcy, which, he was of opinion, should be perused without delay. Deedes would be here by appointment at breakfast, and Government was prepared to afford every facility. We ran over them, and the only remark was, that my grandfather declined taking the title, as he considered that the person should be, by the intention, naval or military;—"but it is unmistakeable, you have only to prove descent, and for fear any other one should anticipate me, 'Sir Horatio Howard,' let me congratulate you; but pray keep it secret until you present your lady with her cards. Have one plate, with 'Mrs. H. Howard,' struck, and the other part of the play leave to my management."

Mr. Deedes arrived, inspected the papers, wished me joy, and was cautioned to secrecy. My uncle requested to know my intentions as to settlement on Ellen. Mr. Deedes assumed

my instructions were, if not now changed, to resist any money arrangement upon these grounds.

"First, the marriage will convey all absolutely, to Sir Horatio—a simple deed conveying to his lady, at his decease, should he die."

"Now, first, what sum or lands will effect all that is necessary.—Say, half my property Mr. Deedes."

"That, sir, will be very handsome." So thought my uncle. "The remainder to my sister's children—unless we have heirs."

"Well, sir, that will depend on her ladyship."

"Drop both those appellations, if you please, Mr. Deedes, until I take them up—'walls have ears'—and it might spoil our business entirely."

"But, sir, when the marriage settlement is signed, the names must be filled in."

"By ourselves, with your permission—you have only to draw them in blank, and we will fill them here the morning of the marriage."

"Very good, sir; but in our office we are

as cautious as you could wish, and a want of confidence which might suggest itself to any of our establishment by such an ominous blank as the omission of the title of baronet, would cause a bad feeling."

"Well, Mr. Deedes, I leave it to your discretion, reminding you that after your deeds are drawn, they may become so much waste parchment by my refusal of the baronetcy—an affair not impossible."

This alarmed the man of law, and he now found that it could easily be completed at the house; and as he would inquire of my uncle, in the presence of his clerk, what name he was to insert, the surprise would be natural. But if it was the intention of Government to raise a peerage on this fortune, then the baronetcy would merely fall in, or, perhaps, might be diverted into the Noble family, as a Brenton claim—into which the lawyers had not yet looked sufficiently. Indeed, I had not quite determined whether I would accept a peerage, if offered. I had no wish for it; but it might

be of importance to my issue. On that I would consult Ellen, hereafter.

'No man can serve two masters.'—When you are lent to the Treasury, do not see too much of the Admiralty. I, therefore, determined to clear off all at Downing Street, before I paid my respects there — being on half-pay.

In the meantime I received a note from our ambassador at Paris, regretting that I did not return to Paris; enclosing from the French minister certain papers, requiring me to be constantly on my guard until I became a married man. That the aim of the faction did not appear to extend beyond the accomplishment of my marriage, for that would destroy their schemes entirely; that they had the most complete information, and would give timely notice. They had this from one of their own set, and spy; and that he would follow them up, and warn me. But that the English government must be vigorous, and not hesitate, if the parties were once arrested.

A note from Legrand intimated that a friend would constantly watch me, and not to evince any surprise at meeting him, and urging me to get Carlos some employment away from me. "I may be employed." My readers require no interpretation.

I communicated with Downing Street; but all was doubt. Unless a legal peg could be found to hang proceedings on, they could not see their way. But when we were alone, Lord C. remarked,

"Sworn attestations, here, if I see the case clearly, will meet this question, if this friend of yours comes over."

As to Carlos, I found him occupation as an Italian master; he was also engaged at Downing Street, and never saw me unless by appointment.

CHAPTER XXV.

One morning, whilst on my way in the carriage towards Grosvenor Square, I saw Noble, apparently proceeding towards Charing Cross; I drew up to await him, and he entered the carriage.

"All right, my good fellow, he is a prisoner in your sanctum."

"Whom do you mean?"

"Legrand."

"I would not trust him alone, opening seals is his trade."

We reached home, and found my uncle entertaining a slight-made, well-dressed, gentle-

manly-looking person. He advanced and held out his hand.

"Legrand!"

"*Oui*, Monsieur!" bowing.

But I said—

"Whence this change?"

"Oh! we dress for the duties we have to perform. French grenadiers, cavalry officers, &c.,—we are padded up to the standard. I have merely been picked of my feathers. I am now in my evening costume—a private gentleman. But I must see you alone."

The others retired.

"I am sent here with the Baron Vick, you will remember that is his name, your friend at Castiglione, we have tracked two of the factious, we have their papers. We can swear to their object—to murder you first—if they can, the bride! that would defer your marriage, and afford time for further operations. But once married, and your will signed, all further hope for them is extinct.

"Now, as no one can prove these matters

but the baron and myself, and as it will, after the depositions are taken, be necessary to capture them with concealed weapons and papers, and remove them from this country, they having forged passports, you must adopt some mode, during to-morrow or next day, of introducing us to the foreign minister. Do you know Salamé? he is an excellent foil."

"I do."

"Call on him, and make him arrange to meet and introduce you to me at Downing Street."

"I will write a note to him." I did so. "Now, you live at my expense at a *first-rate hotel* in London, and keep a carriage, no hesitation, I command here."

"Excellent."

He bowed.

As he left the room, I said—

"To-morrow, perhaps, will serve."

My uncle and Noble, approved highly of my decision. I saw Lord C——, he agreed that Salamé should introduce these gentlemen with-

out me; that my visit should be casual, as if unpremeditated, and having urgent business with these persons, he would see me in the room with them.

The baron and Monsieur Lepetit transacted their business with Salamé, &c., and that evening I was informed by note, that the baron was at an hotel in Bond Street, and would be happy to see me when convenient—The evening before the marriage arrived—Disguised in travelling cap, capote, &c., I drove from Oxford Street, down Bond Street, to the C——, —was admitted to an inner room—desired to write my initials, as the baron expected two friends, who must not meet. I gave H. H. B., was admitted instantly; but he held his finger up—"If any one else comes, you must be concealed in that room. Your life depends upon it, and you must see the face of my visitor, so as to take your precautions to-morrow." I was undecided. "Surely," he said, "you would not compromise me. I tell you he is an assassin, one of your factious friends." I had

no time for thought, for action was now imperative. A person, very similar to the American interpreter entered, and I was soon satisfied of his identity. Legrand entered, and was introduced as his coadjutor Lepretre. There was much whispering, and at length it was arranged that Lepretre would be found at the church door, with friends to cover retreat and obstruct pursuit, as arranged. —"Hanover Square, St. George's."—I heard in very good English. "Oh, yes, I know it well; I have very good reason to know it, and all its secrets."

He departed, and another entered—an Italian countenance, a thorough cut-throat—but light, genteel figure. This was the active person, and to prove how easily he could convert himself into another person, he displayed a red beard, whiskers, &c., and turned his back wig forward, which afforded a new crop. I took a very scrutinising gaze at this hero—he was a little demon. He retired, and I was uncaged. "Well," said the baron, "how do you like your new acquaintance?"

"Oh, one is an old one, he tried to entrap me in America."

"And you sailed, and foiled him, after your officers had invited him to breakfast. That rankles in his breast, too. But be not alarmed, they are well timed. You will not enter by the portico—we will direct them there; some one must occupy your carriage, and the blinds be down. The lady must not enter there; both must come in by the vestry. Now I have many other friends, who must not see you. Yet what road do you take? Give out *Dover*—take the road towards Liverpool. You will have me as your guest occasionally, until the horizon is clear. I must be provided with carriage and horses for Lepretre and myself, or separately. Trust to us, no expense will be wantonly incurred. Now go at once to Lord C., he waits you with some anxiety, and then cautiously leave your carriage as you reach home; Lepretre will watch there."

I saw Lord C——, and measures were

adopted for seizing the parties for high treason contained in letters—but they would be sent to France to account for crimes easily proved there, and the gallies might be their eventual fate, or imprisonment for life.

I entered my door, not without a rude jostle, and the heavy fall of a man on the pavement gave notice that violence had been resorted to. But I was not to be diverted.—"Close the door, Hardy—admit no one without great caution—take all strangers into the next house—Mr. Lepretre will be here, and let him see them—and be silent!"

The poor old man shed tears.—"Are you never to be out of danger, sir?"

"Well, Hardy, I think to-morrow will relieve me from further peril."—Noble's man interrupted us.

"Mr. Lepretre wishes to see you, sir."

"Show him to my room."

There I found him bleeding in the left arm. He and Noble's servant intercepted the assassins. The latter had knocked the

fellow down, when he was struck at by the accomplice, who escaped.

"But, sir, he did not know me in this disguise. It is that Italian! I am not hurt—only a flesh wound, and this is only one of some hundreds in my time. I must sleep here, and get away before daylight. Send your servant for my disguise—the baron will give it to him."

He wrote a note—refused to go to bed, but wished a room to himself in the next house, so that he might be prepared for any further scheme.

"I am afraid," he added, "that this may foil our capture to-morrow."

I concealed all these matters from every one in the house, but sent to Bow Street, to inform them that I had escaped assassination, and left them to pursue their own course. Two of their best men slept in the next house, and recognised Legrand. They concerted with him as to their morning's proceedings, and took him off after midnight, which suited his purpose better.

The morning was heavy, rained hard, and was in no way cheering. Horses for Dover and the travelling-carriage were prepared —They would return from the foot of Shooter's Hill after baiting and resting the horses; they would be decorated—a plain carriage fitted to follow, with servants and luggage, would follow, but turn up St. Martin's Lane to the north—no favours.

Our travelling dresses were humble, and not likely to attract attention. Even Ellen and Louisa, as well as the family, understood 'Dover and the continent' to be our route.

The proceedings of marriages are generally slurred over. It is not my intention to deal in namby-pamby matters, but to follow the assassins to their apprehension.

Ellen had been warned by me that we had danger about us—that she must be prepared to behave well—and think of our mutual safety.

"Horatio, I have long been prepared for this—I have my friends also. Only set a

good example—Fear not for me—trust in God!"

We entered the church some time before the rest of the party, by the vestry, cloaked, in a plain carriage hired for the occasion, and by the back way. A young pair—Harrison and a Gore —represented us, and I had the satisfaction of seeing the countenances of Lepretre, his two friends, and well-known police characters near the great door.

The ceremony proceeded and concluded with some slight noise as of resistance, and we returned to the vestry to complete the signatures. —A note was handed to me.

"The coast is clear, but no delay.—Change rapidly, and *en avant.*" We passed out by the portico and drove home, changed, and taking rapid leave, passed in common servant's attire, —Ellen contracting herself into forty years older,—and drove off without a notice.

The travelling carriage and four, with every pomp that could be devised, still hung two carriages behind the door, leaving room for the

breakfast party. Bands played, and bells rung, which we heard not, and a very protracted breakfast it must have appeared to any expecting to catch a sight of the happy couple.

At Oxford Street the horses felt the load; we discharged the pair, and took four fresh animals, which made up for lost time. "A rich merchant, anxious to save one of the vessels sailing for America," pushed us on, and Birmingham Hen and Chickens, protected us that night. Liverpool next, and thence North, that night, after receiving and writing letters left at the post-office for the baron, Lepretre, and one home for my uncle. Preston afforded us another resting place, but as this was the county of the enemy, we pushed on before breakfast towards Carlisle, and there awaited further instructions.

The baron joined us on the sixth day, and Ellen was much pleased with him.

"You were very fortunate in getting out of Preston. Your name was not known there,

but I saw a bad character, harmless perhaps, unless his interest prompted.—He did not recognize me. You must wait here until we hear from Legrand. Lepretre has both roads to watch, but their game is up. Both those fellows are secured in France before this. There they wished to be sent to prove their innocence! From thence they never recross the English Channel. That man you met in America, is the best shot I know, and has in cold blood killed more than I ever did in self-defence; he is a German, and relation of your Austrian acquaintance, and long in the mountain force. They would be delighted to entertain him at Rome. Many of your countrymen have fallen by his hand at Paris, Brussels, and Vienna; a noted quarreller and fatal duellist. Our cavalry regiments would know him if I pronounced his name."

Letters reached from Legrand. All the plotters fled panic-struck! They knew of the baron's being in England; and although they had no suspicion of his connection with this affair, it was,

they well knew, unsafe for any one deficient in a certain amount of character, to trust themselves within his eagle glance. "You are wanted in London. We must reside in England after this last visit to Paris. Communicate this much."

The baron took my hand. "I am here *de trop*,—in London I hope to assure you that your adage is quite true. Never, coldly and with malice did I ever suffer innocent blood to flow!"

As he left the room, Ellen said—"I do believe him, Horatio."

And now I must take leave of my readers; for my narrative has reached that point at which, after a youth of much happiness, but surrounded with perils, I settled down into the life of a quiet country gentleman. I will not say that the latter portion of my life has not had its own joys and sorrows, the history of which might not be altogether uninteresting or unuseful, but I prefer to retain them in my own

breast, as subjects for my own spirit's meditation.

Of those characters whom the development of my own story has necessarily brought before the reader's attention, I need say but little. The elder Fitzjames disappeared shortly after my marriage with his half-sister, and we never heard any more of him or of my uncle Henry. The younger Fitzjames was compelled to retire from the service, on account of his failing health, and resided in my house until his death, which took place whilst he was still a young man. The mortification he experienced on learning the circumstances respecting his birth, and the nature of his relationship to my wife, was a blow from which he never recovered. * * * *

Neither Lofty, Noble, nor myself, have ever served since the date of my marriage, and I cannot better explain the reason why, than, by asking the following question:—

How does it happen, that when men, passionately devoted to their profession, who

have rigorously done their duty, have made the men of the present day, and at length, reach 'the *bar* of wealth and independence,' and are in a condition to afford the utmost benefit to the profession, are overlooked, disregarded ?"

Simply because they will not be slaves—will not bow to the present powers; will not, under our present regime, where tittle-tattle bears the sway, and St. Vincent is forgotten, degrade themselves by asking to serve under the opinions of their juniors, of lieutenants, mates, or mids., or any unprincipled scoundrel, who can hire an attorney to write a good anonymous letter for him.

Lofty would not serve, for the above reasons.

Noble detests the present system.

None of our children will be degraded, unless, indeed, the system change, and other men take the helm.

These feelings are not secret. Now I may be known, but only to men of high principle;

and they have no cause to betray a secret too well known to the heads of our profession.

* * * *

Reader, the subject of this story lives not. No such happy beings are suffered to remain in this world of trials! I have strayed beyond the limits prescribed to writers of fiction—if it can truly be deemed to come under that description. Scenes have been exhibited which it is customary to veil.—But truth, such pure, simple truth cannot be offensive, and merely throws out the hearts of the actors as they are supposed to have existed.

But as to this marriage—a fact too well known under other names—where much is near reality, and where the eventual alliance has been viewed by narrow minds as unnatural—I must leave others to form their own conclusions.

The opposite case of men selecting children, educating them to be wives, and eventually marrying, is matter of every day occurrence. But here no such complicity existed.

The object of the publication of this work was to unveil vice, expose it in every phase —prove the value and triumph of virtue, and the advantage resulting from a determination to uphold it even in the minutest concerns of life. And surely the mind cannot but 'rest on its oars,' and luxuriate in such balmy feelings as it would experience had the performance of this play been played with all its *untold* excitements on the boards of a British theatre.

This leads me to apologize, if such be due, for some tediously drawn out scenes. But in selecting, curtailing, abridging notes of matters, which one cannot commit to the press without pain and tediousness, much must be conceded for the bare truths selected.

I can only conclude by adding, that there are scenes I could not trust myself to read, much less to copy, at this date. To endure death once is enough!

THE END.

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